FEBRUARY 15, 1988 • $2.25

AMERICA DOWN, BRITAIN UP?

The Editors: Save The Contras

NEW TRENDS IN ABORTION • DENIS DONOGHUE ON OSCAR WILDE

THE NEW REPUBLIC

The awful, empty life of a Congressman

PALO ALTO CA 94305
DEPT OF PHYSICS
STANFORD UNIVERSITY 06*VJ
RON K UNZ 1989
UNZDEPT0F91 6458 FEB27
*7290**********5-DIGIT 94305

Representative John Hiler (R.-Ind.) at National Airport, 6:00 p.m., January 21, after speaking to the Kiwanas Club of Warsaw, Indiana, and catching the 3:10 p.m. flight from South Bend.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

How junk bonds helped provide 50,000 people with a living room and 20,000 people with a living.

They helped by providing Hovnanian Enterprises with the capital they needed to develop affordable family housing. Capital they would've had a hard time getting from commercial banks. Or any place else, for that matter. Because Hovnanian, like 95% of all American companies with annual sales in excess of $25 million, was considered non-investment grade, or "junk," by the major bond rating agencies.

The fact is, without high yield bonds provided by Drexel Burnham, Hovnanian would still be a small, family run construction company. Instead of the second largest developer of for-sale multifamily homes in the country.

To date, Hovnanian has built more than 20,000 condominiums, townhouses and single family homes throughout New York, New Jersey, Florida and New Hampshire. Planned residential communities that have become so synonymous with quality affordable housing that they typically sell out in a single weekend. Making them the envy of the housing industry. Not to mention the place where 20,000 people have made their living. And 50,000 people have made their home.

Drexel Burnham
Helping People Manage Change

Member SIPC. © 1987 Drexel Burnham Lambert Incorporated

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

FOUNDED 1914 — *A Weekly Journal of Opinion* — ISSUE 3,813

WASHINGTON, D.C. — FEBRUARY 15, 1988

Editor-in-Chief and Chairman
MARTIN PERETZ

Editor
MICHAEL KINSLEY
Literary Editor
LEON WIESELTIER
Senior Editors
FRED BARNES, ANN HULBERT,
MORTON M. KONDRACKE, CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER
Managing Editor
DOROTHY WICKENDEN
Associate Editors
MARGARET B. CARLSON, ANDREW SULLIVAN
New Republic Books Editor
(Basic Books)
ROBERT WRIGHT
1988 Politics
HENDRIK HERTZBERG
Economics
ROBERT KUTTNER
Films
STANLEY KAUFFMANN
Theater
ROBERT BRUSTEIN
Music
EDWARD ROTHSTEIN
Poetry
RICHARD HOWARD
Art
MARK STEVENS
Architecture
HERBERT MUSCHAMP
Contributing Editors
ROBERT COLES, HENRY FAIRLIE,
JAMES K. GLASSMAN, VINT LAWRENCE,
LOUIS MENAND, ROBERT B. REICH,
MAGGIE SCARF, RONALD STEEL,
RICHARD L. STROUT, E. V. THAW,
ANNE TYLER, NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN,
MICHAEL WALZER, C. VANN WOODWARD
Editorial-Corporate Coordinator
LAURA E. OBOLENSKY
Assistant to the Editors
JUNE HALEY
Production Manager
BRUCE STEINKE
Copy Editor
LEONA HIRAOKA ROTH
Production Associate
ELDON S. SARTE
Literary Assistant
ANDREW MENDELSOHN
Reporter-Researchers
RICHARD BLOW, ANNE GOODWIN,
WARD MERRITT, ARI Z. POSNER

President and Publisher
JEFFREY L. DEARTH
Associate Publisher
JOAN M. STAPLETON
Circulation Director
TOM HICKS
Controller
JEAN GANDY
Advertising Manager
JENNIFER BARRETT
Circulation Manager
PATTY JONES
Accounting Manager
MARIA F. SALATTI
Circulation Assistant
KRISTIN CONRADI
Advertising Assistant
DARLENE BUSCAGLIO
Accounting Assistant
CHRISTINA R. OVERHOLSER
Back Issues and Reception
JENNIFER WILLIAMS
Corporate Marketing
GUY STODDARD
Leadership Network Advertising
ROBERT F. SENNOTT JR.

4 **TRB FROM WASHINGTON** ..... SEE DICK RUN
With "progressives" like Gephardt, who needs an establishment?

6 **CORRESPONDENCE** ..... On the future of nuclear power &c.

7 **THE EDITORS** ..... SAVE THE CONTRAS
Keeping the Nicaraguan resistance alive is the only way to assure that Ortega keeps his promises.

THE SOUL OF THE JEWISH STATE
Why are nice Israeli boys going door to door breaking people's hands?

8 **CHARLES PAUL FREUND** ..... THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST
Dan Rather, wrinkle cream, &c.

11 **ROBERT BAZELL** ..... SCIENCE AND SOCIETY: IN VITRO VERITAS
The open secret of selective abortions in the test tube baby industry.

13 **ROBERT S. LEIKEN** ..... MANAGUA AND MOSCOW
Time to call the Soviet bluff in Nicaragua.

15 **MICHAEL ELLIOTT** ..... SAMMY AND ROSIE GET PAID
The strange, continuing story of the British economic miracle.

17 **ANDREW SULLIVAN** ..... LAND OF HOPE AND TORIES
Confessions of a teenage Thatcherite.

18 **FRED BARNES** ..... THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING A CONGRESSMAN
The work is mind-numbing, the hours are horrendous, you have no power, and you won last time by 47 votes. What's the point?

22 **ROBERT KUTTNER** ..... GETTING THERE
Running for Congress is even worse than being there.

24 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ..... ON FILMS: AN ODDLY CUT GEM
Victor Erice's exquisite *El Sur (South)*.

25 **DENIS DONOGHUE** ..... INSINCERITY AND AUTHENTICITY
Oscar Wilde by Richard Ellmann

32 **JAROSLAW ANDERS** ..... INSIDE SOLIDARITY
A Way of Hope by Lech Walesa

36 **WALTER DELLINGER** ..... D.C. LAW
The Tenth Justice: The Solicitor General and the Rule of Law by Lincoln Caplan

38 **KENNETH ROSEN** ..... POEM *Dinosaur*

39 **VICTOR BROMBERT** ..... LE MISÉRABLE
Hugoliad: or The Grotesque and Tragic Life of Victor Hugo by Eugène Ionesco

42 **WASHINGTON DIARIST** ..... PUMP UP THE VOLUME

COVER photograph by Taisie Berkeley Trout for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Articles on pages 18 and 22.

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 198, Number 7, Issue 3,813, February 15, 1988. (Printed in the U.S. on January 27, 1988.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 4 & 11, July 18 & 25, Aug. 8 & 15, and Sept. 12 & 19, 1988) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. Leadership Network advertising (212) 684-5500. Yearly subscriptions, $56; foreign, $81; Canada, $70. Back issues, $2.50 (includes postage & handling).

©1988 by The New Republic, Inc.

(ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Available on microfilm from University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106 and Bell & Howell, Old Mansfield Road, Wooster, OH 44691. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. **Subscribers:** Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to **Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 56515, Boulder, CO 80322.** For subscription problems call **800-525-0643.**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TRB®

FROM WASHINGTON

See Dick Run

If ever a man was born to wear a suit, it's shiny Representative Richard A. Gephardt. But these days, whenever possible, Gephardt affects a down parka and Caterpillar Tractor-style cap, in keeping with his new role as tribune of the people. To me he looks like a well-scrubbed little boy playing "farmer in the dell." Yet, combined with a lot of railing against "the establishment" and "the status quo," it seems to be working. Gephardt is leading slightly in the polls for the Iowa Democratic caucuses.

Many have commented on Gephardt's remarkable transformation. After the 1984 election disaster, he was a founder of the Democratic Leadership Council (or "Democrats for the Leisure Class," as Jesse Jackson styles it), a group dedicated explicitly to moving the party to the right. He was widely thought of as a "neoliberal." Just last August he told David Broder of the *Washington Post*, "If you need a label for me, moderate is as good as any." In recent years he's flip-flopped on abortion, busing, the minimum wage, and the Equal Rights Amendment, among other issues.

Everything about Gephardt's plodding political career and his bland personality suggest that his newfound populist passion is phony. But even if the passion is sincere, the populism is a fraud. Gephardt has perfected the Cuomo bait-and-switch, named after its formerly most skilled practitioner. It consists of marketing reactionary liberalism as "progressive" and clothing appeals to selfishness in the language of compassion. The trick is to promote a sense of grievance, which Gephardt does by telling farmers that their crisis is getting worse (despite figures to the contrary) and old folks that people in Washington are plotting to take away their Social Security.

Gephardt talks like this: "We have to have a president in this country who says to the American people that selfishness and greed, get mine now, [are] not the highest values.... We gotta care about one another again. We gotta send a message of compassion." This is exactly how Democrats should be talking. But Gephardt never tells his audiences that *they* should be more compassionate, or contribute more to help others, or reject their own status quo. His actual platform is one long "get mine now."

Gephardt's farm program would create a government-supervised national food cartel, controlling production, giving a monopoly to current producers, and guaranteeing them higher prices. The typical farmer—even the typical "small family farmer"—has assets worth several hundred thousand dollars, which the typical food consumer does not, so this idea clearly is not "progressive" in the financial sense. Nor is it "progressive" in the temporal sense to try to halt the migration from farming that has been going on for more than a century.

Gephardt claims his plan would "save" the government $12 billion a year in farm price support costs, which he would use—depending on the audience—either for deficit reduction or to fund education programs. What it actually is, though, is a hidden food tax. "Progressive"?

Gephardt is best known for his call to "get tough" about foreign trade barriers. He concedes, when pressed, that these barriers have caused only a small fraction of our trade problems. But he fearlessly exploits their demagogic potential. He insists that his call for new trade barriers of our own is not "protectionist" because his ultimate goal is a world of completely free trade.

Be that as it may, the appeal of trade barriers as a campaign issue is not that they will lead to free trade and higher exports in some rosy future. It's that they will halt competition from imports *now*. When Gephardt visits specific factories and promises to save specific jobs, he is not promoting a vision of free trade—which would destroy far more current jobs than the semi-free trade we have today (though it also would create even more new ones). He's promoting a vision of economic stasis, which is "progressive" in neither sense.

Campaigning in Texas and Louisiana, Gephardt supports an oil import fee to guarantee a minimum price of $24 a bar-

continued on page 41

Moving Beyond Confrontation.

Drawing on his experience in the MIT-Harvard Public Disputes Program, a leading mediator and his co-author provide the first jargon-free guide to consensual strategies for resolving public disputes—indispensable to citizen activists, business and government leaders.

"An important contribution...better ways for the public and government to work together." —*DAVID MATTHEWS, President Kettering Foundation*

"The book vibrates and communicates, giving readers a whopping benefit-to-cost ratio." —*HOWARD RAIFFA, Harvard Business School*

Breaking the Impasse

Consensual Approaches to Resolving Public Disputes

Lawrence Susskind and Jeffrey Cruikshank

$19.95 at bookstores, or direct from the publisher.
Toll-free (800) 638-3030. Major credit cards accepted.

BASIC BOOKS, INC. BASIC BOOKS 10 East 53rd Street, New York 10022

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Going above and beyond what's expected— that's good news to me."
Cathleen Black, Publisher, USA TODAY
"I've never been one for giving people what they expect. I've always believed in giving them better. That's why I joined USA TODAY.
While the rest of the world may be comfortable with convention, I think you've got to keep yourself open to change. To improvement.
You have to be willing to explore the options. Weigh the alternatives. And most of all, you have to be willing to trust your own instincts.
Setting new standards isn't easy. Believe me, I know. But when you succeed—when you deliv more than what's expected—the rewards are that much richer."

At Lufthansa, we always go above and beyond what's expected to create the very highest standards in the sky. Maybe that explains our outstanding on-time arrival rate, our meticulously maintained fleet and our friendly courteous service.

It may also explain why in 161 cities worldwide, people prefer flying Lufthansa.

People expect the world of us.

Lufthansa
German Airlines

Lufthansa is a participant in United's Mileage Plus program and Delta's Frequent Flyer program. See your Travel Agent for details.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

STRIKE ONE FOR BABBITT

To the editors:

Hendrik Hertzberg's characterization of Bruce Babbitt's involvement as governor of Arizona in the Phelps Dodge copper strike as "successful mediation" ("Stand-Up Guy," January 4 & 11) is incredible. I lived in Phoenix from 1981 to 1984 and followed the events surrounding the strike. I recall no effort on Babbitt's part to mediate the strike. On the contrary, I remember how he called in thousands of Arizona National Guard troops and the state police to break the strike. The hundreds of miners who lost their jobs and their families, who suffered from Babbitt's use of raw state power, know only too well the real meaning of Babbitt's phrase "Managers feel valued; workers do not."

HOWARD BLEICHFELD
Washington, D.C.

NEW NUKES

To the editors:

Lawrence M. Lidsky says that a proven design for a new, safer nuclear reactor is ready ("Safe Nuclear Power," December 28), but this isn't so. And the light water reactor did not fail in the marketplace. It was removed. The U.S. constructed a regulatory structure around this one technology that has lost the confidence of the industry. No prudent long-term investment can be made in such an atmosphere. The courts, which are not mentioned, have been a factor, often by decisions that were later reversed, but only after the delay had destroyed the economics. The problem with expecting a new approach to safety to satisfy the opposition is that the opposition leadership is dedicated to stopping nuclear power. Any safety test is discounted and new questions are contrived to undercut its impact.

Lidsky claims that some designs for small or modular reactors are ready, but the market's determination is that they are not. The NRC has not provided even a technical evaluation of the safety of these designs. The difference between these concepts and the LWR is that the LWR works. There have been accidents and problems, but they have provided, without harm to any member of the public, a tremendous experience base on which to improve safety and reliability. No new concept or redesign can be based on this depth of experience. The LWR was not chosen by decree. It emerged as the best of the competitors.

My view, while heading the nuclear energy program for the DOE, was that the nation needed research and development in three technologies: advanced LWRs; liquid metal-cooled reactors; and gas-cooled reactors. Industry is contributing millions of dollars per year for gas-cooled reactor research, and makes no claims that its design is ready for the marketplace. There isn't enough funding to do them all properly. If there were any reactors with the potential Lidsky claims, we would all be cheering them on. It is not necessary to contrive a case against a viable technology, as he has done, in order to justify research support for another.

A. DAVID ROSSIN
Los Altos Hills, California

To the editors:

Lawrence Lidsky mentions that radioactive waste is "unavoidable" and that we have developed "astonishingly harebrained schemes" to dispose of it. But until technophiles can figure out what to do with the waste, new, "improved" reactors do not make the process safe. The National Academy of Sciences estimates that it will take three million years for spent fuel to decay to the low radioactivity level of uranium ore. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that by the year 2000 the U.S will have one billion cubic feet of "low-level" wastes—the clothing and equipment of nuclear industry workers—and tailings left where uranium is mined. The federal government would like to tuck the waste away in deep underground repositories, but these plans have been frustrated by numerous geologic problems. At this point there is no safe solution.

ELLIOT NEGIN
Washington, D.C.

Lawrence M. Lidsky replies:

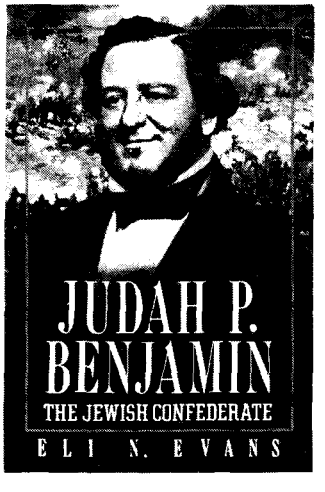
Mr. Rossin provides ample evidence for my argument that the Nuclear Establish-

continued on page 41

A "complex, brilliantly realized"* story of the enigmatic man known as "the brains of the Confederacy."

Confidant of Jefferson Davis, Secretary of State and Secretary of War for the South, Judah P. Benjamin achieved greater political power than perhaps any other Jewish American in history. Yet despite his key roles in the Civil War his life and accomplishments have been shrouded in mystery.

Now Eli Evans' insightful account reveals a man who, although he was a Jew in an era of bigotry, left a legacy of astonishing brilliance and distinguished achievement.



"Eli Evans has brilliantly illuminated one of the most extraordinary lives in American and Jewish history. This is a thrilling story narrated with style and literary grace." —Abba Eban

"This is a remarkable, moving book. Mr. Evans provides us here with a memorable portrait of the man and his troubled times. First-rate history." —Willie Morris, author, *North Towards Home*

"A moving, sometimes painful, and always sympathetic interpretation of Benjamin's life and times. It is superior history and superb biography." —Hodding Carter III*, Commentator, Public Broadcasting Service

469 pages/$24.95

At bookstores or order from the publisher. To charge by phone to your VISA or MasterCard call toll-free 1-800-257-5755 between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. Eastern Time (in New Jersey, Alaska, and Hawaii dial direct 1-609-461-6500). Or you may send check or money order plus sales tax where required to **The Free Press, A Division of Macmillan, Inc., 866 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10022**

THE FREE PRESS 40 YEARS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC
FEBRUARY 15, 1988

SAVE THE CONTRAS

If members of Congress vote to end funding for the Nicaraguan *contras*, they will be saying, in effect, that they trust Daniel Ortega more than they trust Ronald Reagan. Under pressure from his fellow Central American presidents, Ortega has promised to democratize Nicaragua. Under more pressure, he has taken a few steps in the right direction, all of them reversible. In what amounts to blackmail, Ortega threatens to reverse course if Congress votes a penny in aid for the *contras*. Meanwhile Reagan, under pressure from Congress, has reduced his aid request to $36 million, just enough to keep the *contras* alive into the summer. Under more pressure, Reagan has promised to negotiate with Ortega, halt military aid if a cease-fire is agreed to, and keep all aid in escrow unless Ortega reneges on his promises to democratize. Under these circumstances, whom should Congress trust? To us, there's no question that it should be Reagan, if only because his policy is subject to congressional control and Ortega's isn't.

We can understand why Democratic congressional leaders distrust Reagan. The administration is now claiming that it wants *contra* aid in order to advance the Central American peace process, when at various stages Reagan officials tried to sabotage that process. It is seeking $36 million, 90 percent of it for non-lethal items, but only a few weeks ago it was talking about $270 million, most of it military. The administration now says it welcomes a diplomatic solution to Nicaragua's civil war, but everyone close to Central American affairs knows that the administration really hopes for the elimination of Nicaragua's Marxist regime by one means or another. This pattern of deception has been going on for seven years. Iranamok proves that even when Congress thinks it has passed a law to exercise its will on Central America, the administration tries to evade it.

In the present circumstance, it's clear what the administration game is. In this tight spot, facing legislative defeat, it will agree to anything to keep the *contras* alive. Then it hopes that Ortega and Company will do something stupid and/or brutal so that when funding comes up the next time, another majority can be cobbled together to last through Reagan's presidency. Many members of Congress want to kill *contra* aid once and for all, driving a stake through the heart of Reagan's monster.

But this would be a profound error. *Contra* opponents have become so obsessed with defeating Reagan, and so ideologically committed to stopping covert warfare in Nicaragua, that they have lost sight of the good that the administration has done in Central America, albeit sometimes only under congressional pressure. Whatever its initial preferences, the administration has sided with democrats, not rightists, in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. In Panama right now the administration is trying to oust a brutal military dictator in the best tradition of American human rights policy. In Guatemala the administration foiled a right-wing coup attempt when President Vinicio Cerezo authorized negotiations with leftists as part of the Central American peace plan.

As the administration asserts, without military and economic pressure from the *contras* there would have been no Guatemala peace accord last August and no democratic concessions from Ortega in Costa Rica in mid-January. American news organizations report that the *contras* are becoming increasingly effective on the battlefield and are attracting popular support in the countryside. Thirteen civic opposition leaders in Managua were willing to risk arrest to meet with the *contras*. Meanwhile, inflation and shortages (partly due to the *contras*, partly to government incompetence) are swelling public dissatisfaction with the Sandinistas. Congressional liberals who have counseled with the Sandinistas (tripping, we think, perilously close to conducting their own foreign policy and undermining that of the executive branch) ought to be honest enough to acknowledge that a halt in *contra* funding has been the supreme goal of Nicaraguan peace diplomacy—not reconciliation with its neighbors or a desire to achieve internal harmony. They should be honest enough to admit, too, that if the *contras* are removed from the scene, the cause of democracy in Central America has nothing but moral suasion to back it up.

There is nothing in the Sandinistas' record to suggest that moral suasion will be sufficient. To the contrary, ever since coming to power in 1979, they have been promising the world that they seek democracy, non-alignment, and a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mixed economy, while in reality they have become a state-Socialist dictatorship allied with Moscow and Cuba and bent on destabilizing their neighbors. Defector Roger Miranda has confirmed President José Napoleón Duarte's charges that the Sandinistas persist in aiding El Salvador's communist guerrillas. Sandinista defense minister Humberto Ortega has confirmed Miranda's charges that even after signing the Guatemala accords, Nicaragua contracted with the Soviets for MiG-21 combat aircraft and equipment for a 600,000-man army.

When Central America's presidents gathered in Costa Rica on January 14, Nicaragua came under unrelenting criticism for failing to live up to the August accords. El Salvador, the other nation fighting an insurgency, had established a general amnesty, engaged in direct talks with the opposition, and offered a cease-fire, which was rejected. Nicaragua had merely reopened one newspaper and one radio station. (More have been opened since.) There had been repeated cases of harassment of internal oppositionists by Sandinista thugs ("*turbas*") and arrests by government security police. Ortega came to the Costa Rica meeting expecting an extension of the deadline for establishing "full democracy." He acted only when he failed to get it—and after meeting with congressional Democrats who apparently warned that *contra* aid would be approved if he failed to make concessions. He has now suspended his country's state of emergency and promised direct talks with the *contras*, a partial release of political prisoners, and a cease-fire. He has come nowhere near promising constitutional changes that would make Nicaragua a real democracy.

THE ZEITGEIST CHECKLIST

BY CHARLES PAUL FREUND

This Week		Last Week	Weeks on Chart
1.	FOULED ANCHOR	*	3
2.	SAVING FACE	*	4
3.	FLOUNDERING FATHERS	4	12
4.	THE ENEMY WITHIN	*	4
5.	FACE IN THE CROWD	*	4
6.	SLOUCHING TOWARD ZENITH	—	1
7.	PORK RIBBINGS	—	1
8.	E PLURIBUS EUROPE	*	2
9.	WIDE-ANGLE POTSHOTS	—	1
10.	WHEN THE SLEEPER WAKES	—	1

1. FOULED ANCHOR

Dan Rather. Rather's startling behavior has moved CBS News into a fantastic genre of its own. Leaving aside whether Bush was misled by CBS—a pivotal but unresolved point—it's hard to see how a nail-'em-to-the-wall live interview could be squeezed into the format. Attempting it was more than risk, it was hubris. Is Bush's Iranamok role now a poisoned angle, or has interest in it intensified?

2. SAVING FACE

Decrepit boomers. Wrinkle cream Retin-A is lighting up medical phone lines across the country. The Aging America story, of which Retin-A is a major chapter, is building toward the first of what will be many climaxes. But the hair restorers, wrinkle creams, coming sex rejuvenators, etc., paint a depressing picture: a denatured maturity, and a generation desperate to embrace it.

3. FLOUNDERING FATHERS

Nicaragua. Reagan's years of Founding Father-style rhetoric about the *contras* has only left him out on a limb by himself. He has been reduced to talking about putting aid money *in escrow*, as if his Central American policy were a rent strike. This failure of persuasion transcends Reagan's lame duck status; Ortega has done what he can to make Reagan's point for him. The U.S. simply seems indifferent. Imperial Overstretch, anyone?

4. THE ENEMY WITHIN

Palestinians. Coverage of Israel's beatings-not-bullets policy reveals how disingenuous the press's original angle on the riots was. The press at first seemed to call for any force short of live bullets, but brutality plays no better than shootings. This has even renewed an old psychological story: that Israel's role of occupier is rotting its national soul, the sole example in newspaper history of Jungian foreign correspondence.

5. FACE IN THE CROWD

Homelessness. A homeless person has finally emerged as an individual: Joyce Brown. But Brown's case centers on psychiatric issues, not on the forces that create the homeless. Jonathan Kozol's new book is being criticized as ham-fisted, but he does approach homelessness as a social mess *and* an individual tragedy. Do people want to think about this issue, or are they satisfied with a frisson of guilt?

6. SLOUCHING TOWARD ZENITH

Babbitt. Babbitt's admiring press is the latest chapter in a quadrennial Candidate of La Mancha syndrome. According to this theme, if the process really worked, then some dark horse would be chosen for his grand qualities. The point is never the candidate, it's the implied awfulness of the process. Babbitt's predecessors in the role include Terry Sanford, John Anderson, and Morris Udall. Whose fault is it that the system is so awful anyway?

7. PORK RIBBINGS

The budget process. Congress's shameless pork barreling has revived what seemed a dead, well-beaten horse: the line-item veto. The wealth of pet projects stuffed into the huge, last-minute budget—at a time of loud austerity rhetoric—has drawn widespread derision. While Congress will have to be circumvented to establish such a veto, that no longer seems totally impossible.

8. E PLURIBUS EUROPE

Decoupling. The Senate's INF hearings are taking place against an interesting backdrop: France's and Germany's efforts toward an integrated European military force. What is propelling Europe toward previously unimaginable levels of cooperation—militarily, commercially, and otherwise—is its sense of a contracting America. The Eurowimp has been a favored political victim here for 40 years. RIP.

9. WIDE-ANGLE POTSHOTS

Internationalized movies. Are national cinemas in decline? Germany's filmmakers are involved increasingly in mammoth international productions. So, pace Channel 4, are Britain's. French, Australian, and Italian critics are making similar observations. Such complaints are cyclical, but the point is that the age of the director who drew artistic strength from his own culture has been waning for 20 years, and may be over.

10. WHEN THE SLEEPER WAKES

Health. Woody Allen's *Sleeper* posited a future in which '70s health ideas turned out to be mistaken. Well, hahaha. There are now suggestions that Type A's may be *less* likely to have heart attacks, that polyunsaturated fats may contain dangerous free radicals, and that some preservatives may keep you young. A couple of preservatives are even being researched as potential cancer preventatives. Hey, blow some sidestream smoke my way.

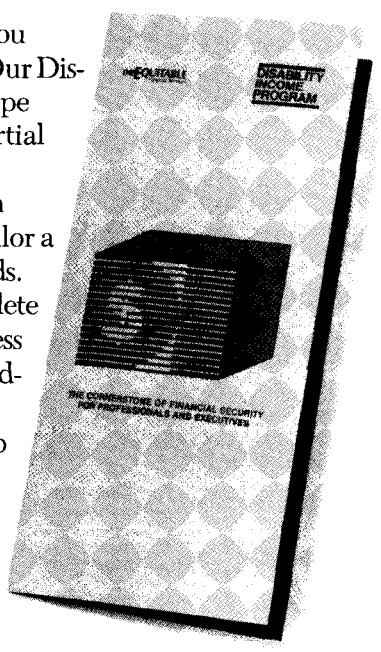
*Item resurfaces in the Zeitgeist after at least one week's absence.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ARE YOU AS SMART ABOUT PROTECTING YOUR INCOME AS YOU ARE ABOUT MAKING IT?

What would happen if you were unable to earn a living for a month? What about three months? That's the average length of a disability, and the odds of it occuring during your productive years are too great to ignore.

Fortunately, The Equitable can offer you financial security if you're ever disabled. Our Disability Income Insurance can help you cope with inflation, receive benefits during partial disabilities or guarantee you the right to increase your coverage even if your health changes. Equitable Agents will custom tailor a Disability Income plan to meet your needs.



What's more, they can offer you a complete range of products and services like Business Overhead Expense, catastrophic Major Medical, Interest Sensitive Life Insurance, Retirement Plans and Mutual Funds to help you meet all your financial goals as well.

So call 1-800-782-9355 or send in the coupon for more information on how to protect and build your income. You'll be surprised at all your Equitable Agent can do for you.

To: J.S. Kalmer, Vice President
The Equitable
Box 2455, General Post Office
New York, N.Y. 10116

Please send me full details of Equitable's Disability Income Insurance program.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone Number ( ) _____

12TN02158

The EQUITABLE
Financial Companies
Health Insurance Products

WE HAVE GREAT PLANS FOR YOU.

Interest-Sensitive Life Insurance from Equitable Variable Life Insurance Co., N.Y., N.Y.
Mutual Funds from Equico Securities, Inc., N.Y., N.Y.
© 1988 The Equitable Life Assurance Society of the United States, N.Y., N.Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

A week *after* Ortega made his assurances in San José, *turbas* stoned the building housing the legal opposition, injuring several people. Security police operating under Interior Minister Tomás Borge rearrested several opposition leaders. And in a speech to 15,000 Sandinista cadres, party ideologist Bayardo Arce specifically ruled out constitutional changes to convert the army and security police into national—as opposed to party—institutions. The Sandinista front, he said, is "the people in power" and therefore it will "never turn over power because we won't usurp the right of the people." At times Daniel Ortega has made similar statements. At other times he has pledged that if the Sandinistas lost an election, they would give up "the government, but not power." Lately he has said the party would give up power. But why should anyone trust him?

It's clear that Roman Catholic Cardinal Miguel Obando y Bravo, the most widely trusted of all contemporary Nicaraguans, does not believe Sandinista promises. Asked on January 12 by Democratic Senator Barbara Mikulski whether he would vote for aid to the *contras*, he said: "I can't tell you how to vote because I'm a mediator. However, in this country there are two irreconcilable opposites. The Resistance [the *contras*] has a model of Western democracy, while the Sandinistas have a different model—one of Communist totalitarianism."

Members of Congress often claim that the United States has no business trying to determine the destiny of Central Americans. Central Americans ought to do so, they say. Very well, Cardinal Obando y Bravo seems to favor aid to the *contras*. So do the presidents of Guatemala and Honduras. Duarte and Costa Rica's Oscar Arias do not endorse *contra* aid, but they insist that there will not be peace in Central America unless there is democracy in Nicaragua. And they say there is no democracy in Nicaragua now. Arias, on American television January 17, would not rule out *contra* aid, as he usually does. "I think the future of more aid to the *contras* is entirely in Daniel Ortega's hands. It depends on what he does in the next few days, in the next few weeks. . . . My impression is that if he advances toward democracy, if he leaves this state of emergency, if he builds a more pluralistic society, if he offers a general amnesty to all the prisoners, then once you have a democracy [and] a cease-fire can be agreed upon, then there is no more reason for aid to the *contras*, but there is no more reason for more war."

We concur. Congress, keeping faith with this country's true friends in the region, should approve President Reagan's limited, escrowed, and conditional aid request. If the Sandinistas agree to reforms leading to real democracy and peace in the region, then *contra* aid will be unnecessary. If they do not, then continued aid will be needed to contain the Sandinistas and divert them from destabilizing their neighbors. To cut off funding now would be to trust Daniel Ortega's unsecured promises. No matter how angry members of Congress may be with the Reagan administration, or how justified that anger, the people of Central America should not have to pay with their prospects for freedom.

THE SOUL OF THE JEWISH STATE

In recent days it sometimes seemed that Israeli defense minister Yitzhak Rabin and perhaps the entire Israeli government had taken leave of their senses. But what so offended and pained Israel's friends cannot be explained away as craziness. It was a deliberate decision "to use force, might, and beatings" (Rabin's words) against rioting Palestinians who have disrupted civil life for more than six weeks. With orders such as these, it is no surprise that some officers sent their troops into rampages of virtually random violence.

During civil conflict and war, certain fragile scruples constitute the thin veneer of civilization that distinguishes states, armies, and police from gangsterism. In suspending those scruples, Rabin has sanctioned brutalities that should burden the conscience of Israel and the whole Jewish people. Supporters of Israel—the U.S. government and the American people, for example—are entitled to expect that this official thuggery cease. Some think the problem is merely Rabin's indiscreet remarks. But this autistic and boorish ex-general needs lessons in more than public relations.

Still, maintaining public order is a legitimate function even of an occupying power. Ritualistic calls for negotiations—or, better yet, for peace itself—will not end the rioting. The rioters rioted precisely so that blood would flow. The rioters certainly do not want public order restored, and any fundamental change in their political circumstances that might incline them to public order is—even on the most optimistic readings—a long way off. This means there will be violent unrest in the future, at least sporadically. And there also will be more or less violent measures taken to end that unrest. Riots are not stopped by bullhorns. No authority can permit the stoning of cars and buses or the closing of public roads for long. No authority can permit young toughs to intimidate people from going to work. Certainly no authority can permit attacks on its soldiers and police without some response. But it is hard enough for uniformed but scared young men facing a wild mob to exercise self-discipline without inflammatory instructions from the defense minister. One cost of an occupation, however unwanted, is that those who enforce order also incur risks. It is an obligation of governing.

By tradition, the Israeli military had early on been guided by a remarkable doctrine called *havlagah*, an austere conception of military self-restraint that held that force would be used only if absolutely necessary. This proud norm appears now to be barely a memory. Likewise the code of "purity of arms," called *tohar hanehsek* in Hebrew, which imposes the strictest constraints on how the soldier is to comport himself. This code was once the pride of the Israeli military and a source of wonder and respect to the democratic soldiery elsewhere. It is not likely to survive many more years of occupation. And if that light goes out, much else will go out of the soul of the Jewish state.

It is impossible to resist noting that much of the moral

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hectoring of Israel comes from those with much-bloodied hands—for instance, the Palestinian leadership itself, whose restraint is well-remembered in Munich and Rome and Athens, in sacked and ravaged Damour in Lebanon, and in too many places in Israel to cite. At the United Nations, Israel is hectored by representatives of bloodthirsty tyrants and cheerleaders of other people's bloodthirstiness. But their standards are not the standards by which we judge Israel or the standards by which, before Israel grew habituated to the occupation, it judged itself.

After two decades many Israelis are reluctant to part with the territories. Recent events may have hardened these views. All along there has been a faction—relatively small in 1967, now large—for whom the territories are part of Jewish destiny. Half of the present coalition government—the half led by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of the Likud bloc—hews to this conviction. That's why Shamir's calls for peace talks, and his recent enthusiasm for the notion of Palestinian autonomy, seem inauthentic. That's also partly why efforts for an international peace conference by the leader of the other half of the coalition—Foreign Minister Shimon Peres of the Labor Party—seem to go nowhere.

The Labor Party must be emboldened to force the issue of serious negotiations for a substantial settlement. If the Cabinet and the parliament prefer to equivocate, as they have for years, Labor must bring that issue clearly before the electorate. If American pressure is required to force that emboldening, fine.

But peace talks require a partner. Most recently, when Shamir agreed to begin talks with King Hussein of Jordan at the Reagan-Gorbachev summit, Hussein refused. For Shamir this was a procedural concession of some importance, since he has resisted Soviet involvement in any settlement. King Hussein is waiting for the approval of all the other Arab leaders, including Yasir Arafat. He, and the world, will wait forever. And Hussein is indispensable. The West Bank was Jordanian territory before Jordan attacked Israel in 1967. Even today most Palestinians are citizens of Jordan.

But any agreement must revolve around the West Bank Palestinians themselves. Unfortunately, the Palestinians in the streets are rioting for a unilateral Israeli withdrawal, not for representation at peace talks. There are distinguished Palestinians in the occupied territories who are eager for talks, but they are more likely to be heard these days exhorting the rioters. The Palestinians are savoring Israel's disarray and embarrassment. It is a rare moment for them and they are exulting in it as the psychological and moral equivalent of real victories. How sad. This will not bring them real relief or real power.

Justice for the Palestinians and security for the Israelis—which is also a requirement of justice—would come from the kind of territorial and functional compromise that is self-evident to many outsiders and acceptable to most of the Israeli Labor Party. Some recent apostasies within the Likud have enlarged the constituency for compromise.

Will some Arab spokesmen emerge to encourage this tendency? Not if the PLO has its way. At a meeting of the Arab League, which could barely stifle the collective yawn of the Arab world, Arafat did his old reprise about the inevitable triumph of the Palestinian revolution. On such false promises do his people drink and die. But there is nothing inevitable about the Palestinian revolution. Its success, in fact, depends on Palestinian liberation from the PLO. It's not such a bad deal for them: the Palestinians swallow the idea of not having Arafat representing them at peace talks he doesn't want anyway, talks he has sabotaged for years. And the Israelis give up most of the occupied territories. To paraphrase the Yiddish expression, from our word processor to God's ears.

Science And Society

In Vitro Veritas

IT IS NOT every day that a woman has five kids at once, so the recent birth of quintuplets in Michigan attracted a lot of attention. But this was not the rare, chance occurrence of nature from the good old days when there was only one way to make babies. These infants are the products of in vitro fertilization. The largely unreported aspect of the story is that a pregnancy with five children is enormously dangerous to the infants and to the mother (although in this case all six were healthy). Such multiple births, with all their hazards, are preventable. Many doctors believe they should be prevented, even with abortion if necessary. This is just one reminder of the complexity of the ethical issues raised by the new technologies of reproduction, and how we are failing to face up to any of them.

Louise Joy Brown, "the world's first test tube baby," will celebrate her tenth birthday this summer. Since her birth in England, in vitro fertilization has become increasingly common. More than 10,000 IVF babies have been born around the world to couples with some problem, such as blocked fallopian tubes or a low sperm count, that had prevented pregnancy. More than 100 clinics in the United States carry out the procedure, some of them as corporate profit-making ventures. But though it is common, it is not easy. The majority of couples fail to get a baby, even though many try several times and spend about $6,000 for each attempt. It is often the effort to increase the success rate that leads to multiple births.

"You can have the whole procedure going very smoothly, apparently with good eggs and good sperm and good embryos, and only three out of ten women will get pregnant," said Patrick Steptoe, who delivered Louise Joy Brown and who now runs a large IVF facility in England. That rate of success is quite high. Many programs, particularly the smaller, less experienced ones, have much lower rates.

To increase the chances of success during IVF the woman receives injections of one or more drugs to make her produce numerous eggs in that cycle. Sometimes the doc-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tor will extract 15 or more eggs. They are mixed with the sperm in a laboratory dish (not a test tube) for two or three days. Usually not all the eggs fertilize, but typically there are three or more, sometimes as many as ten, embryos growing in the laboratory dish. The crucial question is how many embryos the doctor should put back into the uterus.

Over the years researchers working with IVF have learned that returning only one embryo almost never results in a pregnancy. If the procedure works at all, it is when the doctor puts back more than one. In fact, the chances of success increase proportionately with the number of embryos placed back into the uterus. Usually in a successful procedure only one of several remains and grows into a normal baby. But sometimes more than one survives. As a result, women in IVF programs have a much higher than normal rate of multiple births.

Even carrying twins greatly increases the risk to the mother and the chances of premature birth and other dangers to the infants. For triplets and above the hazards grow exponentially, and, of course, the chances of such high multiple births increase with the number of embryos returned.

So the issue is how to maximize the chances of success and minimize multiple births. In Britain Parliament is considering legislation that would limit the number of embryos returned to three. No such laws exist in the United States, and people involved in IVF don't want them because they fear that pressure from special interest groups, especially anti-abortionists, will lead to far greater restrictions.

One question is what to do with the embryos in the dish that are not returned to the woman's body. Some people regard those as living human beings, and object to their destruction. Some IVF programs freeze any embryos over a certain number, usually three or four. They can then be placed in the woman's uterus at a later time. This "cryopreservation" is becoming more common, but it too carries ethical and legal problems. One need only recall the case of the Rioses, a couple killed in a plane crash who left some embryos in freezer in Australia. Mr. Rios's children are still locked in a battle for his estate with relatives who say they are litigating on behalf of the frozen embryos.

Many couples, desperate to have a child, will ask that their doctor put back as many embryos as there are in the dish. Why, they ask, for the great economic and emotional price they are paying, should they not have the greatest chance of success? Many IVF programs, particularly the newer and smaller ones, which want to increase the success rate, are willing to do it.

Before the Michigan case, selective abortion, euphemistically called the "embryo reduction procedure," was almost a secret in IVF. Almost nothing is published on the subject in the scientific literature, but some doctors do it. Using an ultrasound probe to guide a needle, they are able to puncture the hearts of some of the fetuses, leaving others to survive. "It's like hearsay," says Dr. David Navot, who heads the IVF program at Mt. Sinai Medical Center in New York. "People who are dealing with IVF and occasionally get into multiple pregnancies know where to go. But there are no statistics, no numbers."

Navot points out that those who are carrying out the procedure do so "for sound scientific and medical reasons. They are saving two fetuses instead of losing four or five and possibly the mother." That is undeniable, and the secrecy is understandable. People whose main work is helping couples have babies certainly do not want anti-abortion demonstrators at their door.

This society is coping with the multiple-birth question the way it is dealing with most other issues concerning new reproduction technology. Heads stay in the sand for fear of pressure from special interest groups until a court case forces the issue into the open. The danger here is that the court decision can impose more restrictions than might have resulted from an open discussion.

Many doctors believe they should be able to offer selective abortions openly. Lives would be saved and more couples would be able to have children. This new technology could be exploited fully without posing a danger to the women who get pregnant or to the children they carry. But so far the fear has prevented open discussion.

THERE ARE many more dilemmas ahead. The birth of Louise Joy Brown was a true historic moment in science. Once researchers attained the ability to grow the human fetus outside the body even for a few days, there were new opportunities for all sorts of manipulations of the reproduction process.

To get an idea of the possibilities, one need only look at the multibillion-dollar livestock industry, where ethical considerations do not impede new technologies. There, for example, veterinarians remove eggs from expensive cows, fertilize them through IVF with the sperm of prize bulls, and place them into inferior surrogate mothers who carry the calves to term. The body of the expensive cow is considered far too valuable to be wasted for calfbearing. What if a wealthy woman wanted to save herself the risk and the stretch marks? She and her husband could have their child without her having to endure pregnancy.

Cattle breeders also have learned how to divide the embryo of a prized animal in half, artificially creating identical twins. There is no technical reason this could not be attempted with humans. Combined with freezing, this leads to an interesting possibility. "One could implant one half of the embryo," says Dr. Jon Gordon, also of Mt. Sinai Medical Center, "and freeze the other half for 30 years, then implant it. An individual could actually be staring at his identical twin who was two months old while he was 30 years old."

Gordon spends a lot of time thinking about these rather bizarre possibilities because his research is more likely than most to create quandaries. He has managed to implant genes into the eggs of mice during the IVF process. The genes are carried by the animals as they mature and then passed on to their offspring. They become part of the animal's germ line. "One has the potential," Gordon says, "to insert genes into human beings from any source, from plants from bacteria from apes from dogs. The person who received these genes would then have the potential to trans-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mit them to his children and to his children's children."

Gordon's research is not intended as a scenario for a low-budget science fiction film. It is quite possible that gene insertion eventually could offer a cure for genetic diseases, just as in vitro fertilization has enabled thousands of couples to have children. As a society we should decide which of the uses of the new technologies are reasonable and which are frivolous or dangerous, before someone gets enough signatures on a petition to put a stop to all of it.

ROBERT BAZELL

Robert Bazell is the science correspondent for NBC News.

Breaking up is hard to do.

MANAGUA AND MOSCOW

MAJ. ROGER MIRANDA BENGOECHEA'S recent defection from the Sandinistas and his revelations of the 600,000-man army the Soviets are planning to build in Nicaragua seized the headlines last month for good reason. Miranda was present at all military discussions of the Sandinista leadership and kept the records of the National Directorate. He accompanied Humberto Ortega at meetings with foreign leaders such as Fidel and Raul Castro, Kim Il Sung, and former Soviet defense minister Dimitri Ustinov. The burden of proof on compliance with the Arias plan suddenly shifted to Managua. The Sandinistas' recent concessions testify to that. But the headlines missed Miranda's detailed picture of Sandinista ambitions, particularly in their uneasy relationship with the Soviets. After four interviews with Miranda, I came away with a picture of a straitened Sandinista regime seeking a deeper Soviet commitment, and a distant superpower still cautiously weighing its would-be satellite. It's a relationship of love, not marriage.

The specifics of the Soviet-Nicaraguan-Cuban military relationship are settled in the "Tripartite Commission," established in 1980 to negotiate the first five-year military plan, signed in Moscow in 1981 by Humberto Ortega. The recent deal to expand the Sandinista army to 600,000 men—proudly confirmed by Humberto Ortega and then indignantly denied by Daniel Ortega—was worked out in exactly the same forum and involved the clear participation of both men. Miranda recalls in detail the meeting at which Daniel Ortega himself approved the plan at an October reunion of the National Directorate. Miranda accompanied Humberto. Besides the nine members of the Directorate, also present were Joaquin Cuadra, the chief of the general staff, Foreign Minister Miguel D'Escoto, and Vice Foreign Minister Victor Hugo Tinoco. "Daniel arrived 20 minutes late. He came in with Joaquin Cuadra. Joaquin explained the details. How many regiments, how many brigades of infantry, how many rifles, artillery, systems, and so on . . . was discussed." What was approved by the Sandinista leadership was not "a Defense Ministry draft proposal," as Daniel Ortega wrote in a recent op-ed piece for the *New York Times*, but a protocol negotiated in Managua by Soviet, Cuban, and Nicaraguan work teams, leaving only the signing for Moscow in the spring of this year. It was a carbon copy of 1981.

Except for the scale. The agreement calls for a two-stage buildup of the Sandinista army. During the first stage, according to the plan that Miranda brought with him, "The mercenary forces will be reduced to their lowest strength, after sustaining a total defeat during the period 1988-1990." After the defeat of the *contras*, the second stage (1991-95) involves a further 50 percent numerical increase of the armed forces, as well as the introduction of offensive self-propelled artillery and a squadron of MiG-21 fighter planes. Daniel Ortega contends that Miranda's document calls for some shrinkage of the regular army after 1990. But, Miranda responds, this conceals the agreement's premise: the defeat of the *contras*. That would release half of the army for other missions. Moreover, the vast increase in trained reservists and militia better fits Sandinista plans to militarize society. And both regulars and reservists would be trained to send lightly armed troops into neighboring countries and to aid local guerrillas in the event of an American invasion of Nicaragua.

THE SANDINISTAS believe that an American invasion will occur because of their commitment to help install "fraternal regimes" in Central America, a pledge founded on the principle of "revolutionary internationalism." The content of this doctrine was first clearly spelled out in August 1981, when Humberto Ortega declared to a closed session of army officers that "at the triumph of the Sandinista revolution . . . the historical development of society was polarized into two great camps: on one side, the camp of imperialism . . . led by the United States . . . on the other side, the socialist camp . . . with the Soviet Union in the vanguard." In the same speech, Ortega announced that "Marxism-Leninism is the scientific doctrine that guides our revolution. . . . Without *sandinismo*, we cannot be Marxist-Leninists, and *sandinismo* without Marxism-Leninism cannot be revolutionary." Miranda remembers the speech well, and the spin control that was needed after it was leaked to the European press. "We worked all night to get out an official edition without that part. Why? Because Humberto said: 'Even if we don't deceive people, at least we can confuse things. A doubt will remain.' "

In Humberto's view, Moscow and Managua are united by "ideology, strategy, and a common enemy." But there are problems. Miranda recalls, "[Humberto] would always say to me, the [Sandinista] leadership is convinced that Nicaragua is not a top Soviet priority. The Russians have their own problems and commitments. But on the other hand they know that we are crucial to their establishing a more stable, strategic presence in Latin America." The Sandinista leadership believes that the Russians are interested

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in Nicaragua because of its location on the American mainland and on the Caribbean Basin, its proximity to the Panama Canal, and its own potential as a bridge between the Atlantic and the Pacific, with its ports on both oceans. The National Directorate was struck by the recent Soviet offer to supply two hydrographic boats for charting the depth and currents of the seas—"one for each ocean."

The Soviet Union is also deeply implicated in the training of the Sandinista army. Miranda differs sharply with administration estimates of 3,000 Cuban military advisers now in Nicaragua (Miranda says there are only 300); he places more emphasis on the effect of Soviet training. Some 11,000 Sandinista army officers have now received military and ideological training in Cuba and Soviet-bloc countries, mainly the Soviet Union. In 1985 the Sandinistas agreed to a Contadora plan to reduce foreign military advisers because they felt that with some 6,000 Soviet-trained officers at that time they had less to lose from such a measure than Honduras and El Salvador. Thus the Sandinistas, like the Cubans, now have a self-sustaining army whose officers, trained in the Soviet Union, "return indoctrinated."

STILL, THE anxieties remain. The Sandinista leadership worries about what the Soviet Union will do in a crisis. Although the Sandinistas are dependent on Moscow, Moscow has made no direct security commitment to them in the event of an invasion, as they did in Cuba. They won't be sending any troops. To add to this, the Soviets have consistently urged the Sandinistas not to declare themselves openly Marxist-Leninists. They have congratulated them on speaking of a mixed economy and non-alignment. Daniel Ortega's policy of moving slowly, preserving all the appearances of a pluralism and mixed economy, nicely matches the Soviet caution, and contrasts with Humberto's dogged insistence on extracting a public Soviet commitment. Both Ortegas understand the tactics of deception, which "undermine any plan for an American intervention and permit a maximum inflow of resources from non-Communist countries."

But the Sandinistas feel cramped by these constraints and envy Castro's relative shelter. A great aim of Sandinista policy is to obtain a firmer Soviet commitment, of the kind the Cubans gained in 1961-62 by declaring themselves Marxist-Leninists and receiving Soviet missiles. These days the symbol of a Soviet commitment is a MiG fighter squadron. In 1981 the Soviets promised to deliver the Sandinistas a squadron of MiG-21s. But in the months after the U.S. invasion of Grenada, the Cubans indicated to the Sandinistas that the squadron would not be forthcoming. The Sandinistas refused to consider this an official announcement, and Humberto Ortega decided to travel directly to Moscow to discuss the matter with Defense Minister Ustinov. Miranda was present at the meeting in May 1984. "Poor Ustinov. He'd been ill for a while. He said, yes, the MiGs were a Soviet commitment, but maybe he didn't know, hadn't gone to a meeting of the Politburo for a while. Or maybe he just lied." But the MiGs did not come. Instead, the Soviets sent MI-24 Hind helicopters to combat the *contras*.

There were solid tactical reasons for this Soviet dodge, though they were never explained to the Sandinistas. Miranda says that the strength of the *contras* in 1984 surprised the Soviets and Cubans as well as the Sandinistas. The first priority was to defeat them, and military requisitions shifted accordingly. Soviet Hind helicopters began arriving in Nicaragua in the fall of 1984.

But the Sandinista leadership also saw the failure to send the MiGs as a sign, once again, that Nicaragua was not close enough to Moscow's heart to risk a major clash with the United States. The Reagan administration had indicated that delivery of the MiGs would signal a wider conflict. The episode renewed Humberto Ortega's determination to press the Soviets for a firmer bond. When Soviet officials such as Vladimir Zagladin of the Central Committee and Boris Yeltsin visited Nicaragua last spring, Humberto tried to "sensitize them." The Soviet officials complained that they were already overextended and cited their costly SDI competition with the United States. Humberto countered that Nicaragua had an important role in international strategy against American imperialism. "He argued that Nicaragua was a worthy investment, that such a small country, armed by the Soviet Union, was touching a nerve in the United States. It was distracting and diverting the USA. I always have the impression that the Soviets left convinced of that." Miranda's impression was reinforced when last September the Russians unilaterally renewed the offer of MiGs—to be delivered in 1990.

THE ORTEGAS' efforts to extract a stronger Soviet commitment helps explain some of the paradoxes of Sandinista policy. It casts light on Daniel Ortega's otherwise inexplicable visit to Moscow immediately after Congress's vote in April 1985 against *contra* aid. Congressional pique led to a vote for new *contra* aid in June 1985: "That may have looked like a stupid decision, but not from the point of view of the Sandinista Directorate. What they saw was an opportunity to make a significant gesture to the Soviets . . . the Sandinista leadership regards the Congress as, at best, a transitory friend (*'amigo de paso'*). The Soviet Union is their real friend. In the National Directorate, there was a discussion of whether Daniel's trip wouldn't tear down with one hand what you had just worked to build with another. But the Soviet relationship was far more important to them. In fact, they considered that it was precisely by alienating Congress that they could force the Soviet hand. Daniel could appear in Moscow as one who had made a supreme sacrifice. It would be that much harder for the Soviets to reject his requests—for the economy, for more arms, etc."

One concern among critics of *contra* aid has been that Moscow will simply match the United States escalation for escalation. But, as Miranda points out, Soviet officials have actually made it quite clear that Nicaragua is not so important to the Soviets that they would be prepared to face a direct military confrontation with the United States. Moscow has provided substantial military and economic aid in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

order to acquire a client on the American mainland. But as Zagladin told a visiting American delegation in Moscow in 1985, the Russians "are not prepared to make a crisis in bilateral relations with the United States over Nicaragua." Thus Sandinista anxiousness is not misplaced. Were the United States to indicate a bipartisan commitment assisting a democratic outcome, it is hardly likely that the Soviets would challenge the Americans in their "back yard," several thousand miles from the Kremlin.

ROBERT S. LEIKEN

Robert S. Leiken is co-editor of *The Central American Crisis Reader* 1987 (Summit).

The British economic miracle.

SAMMY AND ROSIE GET PAID

BY MICHAEL ELLIOTT

London

It now seems clear that the years from 1982 to 1985 were something of a golden age in London. The explosion of entrepreneurial activity that followed punk started to consolidate itself in Covent Garden (newly renovated) and Soho, slap in the middle of town. Design studios, graphics houses, advertising agencies, the rag trade, the catering business—all bubbled with creativity. Channel 4, the best-conceived and most imaginative television station in the world, went on the air in the winter of 1982 and immediately spawned an industry of small-scale program-makers.

Every week, it seemed, a new restaurant opened. The Indian and Chinese eateries that had for years offered cheap food in grubby surroundings spruced themselves up. Cocktail bars and wine bars came back into vogue. The English National Opera, as devoid of pretension as any of its kind can be, had a great run of hits. Rock and jazz venues mushroomed. And—most deliciously—nobody made anything of it.

For those of us in the know, the new London was something of a dirty little secret. That London had quite suddenly become an exciting place to live; that it had rid itself, after 35 years, of the British sickness (palming substandard fare off on consumers too cowed to complain)—all this went unremarked.

The British were determined to be gloomy. We had been conditioned to think that we were *very, very* poor, and *very, very* miserable. So when, in January 1986, I wrote a long article in the *Economist* saying that London was a rich city and rapidly getting richer, I was forthwith labeled a lackey of Mrs. Thatcher, and accused of confusing style with substance. Two years later, I enjoy, in a small kind of way, the reputation of a seer. Property developers ask me to take part in videos on booming London. But what I wrote then was, it turns out, more elegy than prophecy.

Michael Elliott is the industrial editor of the *Economist* and the author of a book on modern London.

Nobody really predicted the speed of change. London has gone money-mad. Channel 4's latest game show is called "The Stocks and Shares Show"; contestants put a stake of cash on a portfolio of investments. Hanif Kureishi, the screenwriter, said recently that "the Thatcher permanent revolution has been too swift and far-reaching for coherent response." He did not quote figures, but I will.

In the last four years Britain has averaged real GDP growth of about 3.7 percent—faster than anywhere else in Europe or America. Add the "London Effect" (say, two percent growth above the average for the country). Add, again, that ten percent (at least) of London's economy that is "on the black" (in the informal sector), probably growing faster than the official economy. You end up with four years of growth in the capital that was so fast the strains were bound to show, and they have.

Statistics on the British economy as a whole are starting to go haywire. By most calculations, in March, when the chancellor of the Exchequer makes public his plans for fiscal year 1988-89, he will announce that he has a budget surplus of about $16 billion. That would allow him to cut the basic income tax rate to 25 percent and still have about $12.5 billion to play with. Manufacturing output is growing at an annual rate of 6.5 percent. The property market is breathtaking. London house prices increased by 25 percent in the last year, paused for a few weeks after Black Monday, and then raced off again. Latest projections are for hikes of about 20 percent this year. The price rises in the capital are having a ripple effect on prices for land 250 miles outside London. Taxes on commercial property in the City of London are now higher than rents in prime Manhattan locations. Comparing like with like, London is at least twice as expensive.

London's car of choice is a Peugeot 205GTI—a kind of rocket-powered shoe box, not yet much seen in America, smaller and faster than a BMW. It does not always help. On the evening of December 7 last year, two accidents five miles apart gridlocked the whole of central London, strand-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing 50,000 cars. Retreat from the crazed traffic to the tube and you find that it carries 1.5 billion more passenger-miles than in 1982. The tube is now crowded and disgusting. London has become like a Third World city with Tokyo prices, which I suppose is pretty much what Tokyo is.

SO FAR SO—what?—good or bad? In a characteristically confused way, Britain is stumbling into a debate about what kind of nation it has become. And Britain being good old Napoleonic, centralized Britain, much of that debate is really about Londoners' view of London—exciting and prosperous, or unlivable.

The most recent phase of this debate has been sparked by a film—Stephen Frears and Hanif Kureishi's *Sammy and Rosie Get Laid*. Reviewing it in TNR, Stanley Kauffmann declared that the film's subject is hell: "This particular hell is the inner city of London today, chiefly populated by blacks and Asians" (which, for the record, it isn't). Kureishi would, I think, take Kauffmann's summation as a compliment. His own view, in a reply to an attack on his film and five others said to be like it by the professor of modern history at Oxford, is that Britain has become a "squalid, ugly, and uncomfortable place . . . an intolerant, racist, homophobic, narrow-minded rathole run by vicious suburban-minded materialistic philistines." It is impossible to evaluate claims like that—they are too personal. I do not find London, or Britain, to be hellish. But like Kureishi, I have little doubt that to live here now is to buy a ringside seat at a revolution, and you need strong nerves for that.

The seeds of the revolution are economic. Leaving aside agriculture and energy, the proportion of the British working population employed in manufacturing has shrunk from 40 percent in 1971 to 25 percent now. The wrench needed to get the economy to levels of productivity seen in the rest of Europe took longer than anyone anticipated. But it has now been done. Hence the current rapid growth.

The wealth that has come with growth has been distributed in ways that are relatively new. Britain now has as many stockholders as members of labor unions. More than 60 percent of households own their own homes. This last figure, in particular, is important. The British tax system has encouraged home ownership for a generation, while its rent-control laws have, at the same time, dissuaded landlords from renting private property. Those in their 20s of quite modest income, now buying their first homes, have a good chance of having parents, still alive, who were the first members of their family to own their homes. By the year 2000, 66 percent of those over 65 will own their own homes. When these parents die, their house-owning children will inherit equity on—for Britain—a scale unprecedented outside the old rentier class. This single form of wealth transfer (estimated to be worth $16 billion in 1990 at today's prices) will do more than anything since German machine guns on the Somme to crack the British class system.

And there's the rub. Say, for the sake of argument, that the social "motive" of economic growth in Britain today is not to rebuild a battered economy (like those of Germany or Japan after the war), or to urbanize a rural one (France, Italy), but to protect the gains made by a growing meritocracy. What kind of country do you then end up with?

Arguably, a troubling one. Immediately after Thatcher won her third general election last June, Peregrine Worsthorne, the true-blue Conservative editor of the *Sunday Telegraph*, warned against "bourgeois triumphalism." Reinterpreted, the thesis goes something like this. There are now so many Britons who espouse the values of the new economics—because it makes them richer—that no political opposition to Thatcherism can succeed unless it satisfies them. So political opposition must accommodate itself to the ruling economic doctrine, as it has.

On January 13 the leaders of the centrist Social Democrat and Liberal parties, in hopeless disarray after the election, put their names to a policy document that was more Thatcherite in its economic policy than Thatcher. It was quickly disavowed by their parties, but few doubt that the die has been cast. Labour—also in political disarray—is likewise coming to terms with the economic consequences of nine years of Thatcher. Its program at the next election will not threaten the gains of the new class.

The combination of a convergence of economic policy and inept political opposition means that the main challenge to Thatcher now comes from factions within the Conservative Party. The most tired topic of dinner party conversation in London this winter was the "Japanization" of Britain—meaning rule by one political party, with warring factions, amid a national consensus on economic policy.

WHY SHOULD this not be a pleasing prospect? It is a combination that has not done Japan too badly. Moreover, it can be argued that a consensus by political parties that the country they affect to rule is unalterably capitalist in nature has let America avoid the flip-flops of policy that have dogged postwar Britain.

It is on this rosy picture of the horizon that Ralf Dahrendorf, the German sociologist who loves Britain more deeply than most of the British, has just dabbed a few rain clouds. Dahrendorf sees a tendency in the British to "define out" those who do not share in the dominant culture's goals and aspirations. He fears that we are beginning to tolerate the existence of a permanent underclass of ten percent to 15 percent of the population, which he calls "vertical" defining-out, and that we may also "laterally" reject other groups: blacks, gays—in short, the Kureishi litany.

I am not sure Dahrendorf is right. Relations between blacks and whites under 20—which, surely, is what counts—seem to me to be better than we have any right to expect. John Lloyd, the *Financial Times* columnist, argues that we have become too tolerant, and too secular, for any illiberal backlash to get far. On the other hand, a bill now before Parliament would make illegal the "promotion" of homosexuality in schools. For the sake of argument, say Dahrendorf is just right enough to be troubling. Then who defends those defined-out minorities? It is there that the silence in the new British policy is deafening, and there

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

that Worsthorne and traditionalists like him have a case.

Stripped of a certain Burkean and Disraelian dressing, the case is simply one of noblesse oblige. In a British (more accurately, English) society in which preordained status was all, they contend, each man knew both his rights and his obligations. Pure pursuit of the profit motive was bad form, instant gratification a denial of the rights of generations yet unborn, and so on. These self-imposed constraints have now gone. There is much romantic rubbish in the argument, and a dash of paternalism too. Nevertheless, the triumph of the meritocracy does mean that one more constraint on the majority has gone up in smoke from a ducal chimney.

Britain cannot look to Parliament to protect minorities or views outside the mainstream; more than ever before, Parliament is a creature of the executive. On January 15

Land Of Hope And Tories

It was by sitting on a public bus two hours a day for seven years that I came to sense an England beyond my home and the BBC. The bus has been discontinued in the last few years: uneconomic, socialistic, always late. It was, of course, all those things. The driver insulted the passengers, stopped to have a drink in one of the pubs en route, and didn't show when the weather was bad. I never paid my fare, either. My state-subsidized bus pass took me to my state-run school. There, with state-regulation books and pencils, I was taught Latin while the Sex Pistols cut their first single.

It was clear, then, especially in the South, that this England was going to change. It wasn't simply the coarsening of punk culture that pointed to the imminent coarsening of Thatcher politics. The open spaces of vegetable plots in the middle of our town—a relic of the need to produce more food during the war—gave way to American-style housing estates. My school was abolished by the Labour government of 1974-79, because, though free and the creation of the postwar Labour government, it was "elitist." It was replaced by a modern, Thatcherite private school, which laid greater emphasis on computers than Latin. The railway line was turned into a freeway; the church spire was obscured by a new Safeway.

I felt unease, not simply because I was born into a country that sent me to church every morning and Ska-reggae parties every Saturday, but because it was still unclear which of these symbols would win out. It is now taken for granted that the Americanization of multiracial, entrepreneurial Britain, of *My Beautiful Laundrette* and the Big Bang, was somehow inevitable. It wasn't.

Mixed with the attraction of change was a profound fear of what lay ahead. The left felt it most, and fatally became the conservative party of the Thatcher years, defending the Britain of national health, the unions—indeed, of almost anything that seemed threatened. Outside of democratic politics, reaction took more gruesome forms: striking miners' armies flailing against the police lines, race attacks against blacks and Asians, the almost psychotic jingoism of the Falklands War press. The fear was no less incoherent than the passion for change, but it lacked a leader. And in the end, it lacked power.

The great paradox of Mrs. Thatcher's conservative revolution is that it destroyed the England it wanted in part to preserve. The logic of the market separated families, presided over a great migration from the North to the South, uprooted communities, and in its use of force and anger, unbalanced the civility of a culture now deeply antagonistic toward itself. It is not true, as conventional wisdom has it, that "two nations" have been created. The North-South divide is not as acute as it is made out. As house prices rocket in the South, and the railways are electrified, yuppie commuters have invaded working-class towns up to 300 miles north of London. The fastest drops in unemployment in Britain have occurred in the last year in the North. Depressed cities such as Liverpool have to be contrasted with the rebirth of Glasgow or the high-tech wealth of Leicester or York.

What's been created is a dozen nations, separated less by class than by culture. In London, the contradictions have intensified: new Chinese immigrants now vie with third-generation blacks; "Sloane rangers" (preppy yuppies) rub noses with South London skinheads; gay couples live a block away from my grandparents, who remember Empire Day. The *Daily Telegraph* vies for space on the newsstands with the revamped, glossy *Marxism Today*. For Americans, this incongruity is a way of life. For Britons, used for a century at least to some unifying ethic—whether it was imperial destiny, socialist decency, or just a dignified pre-Diana monarchy—it's a shock.

Mrs. Thatcher has a response to this. It's an increasingly shrill call for a return to Victorian values, to thrift, self-control, even, in the words of her 1988 New Year's address, to a new era of "tidiness." My parents see the point. I'm afraid I can't. Increasingly, it jars, like some displaced parody of an Englishness that has ceased to exist. Having killed off civil old England, she now expects to revive it by the culture of neo-Victorianism. To at least half of the English—the least and perhaps also the most successful—it sounds absurd. She has rightly earned their respect, she has even given them the chance to succeed, but she has never fully understood them. Nor does she have the capability, or the imagination, to start now.

Orwell predicted back in 1941 that in the socialist future, "The Stock Exchange will be pulled down . . . the country houses will be turned into children's holiday camps, the Eton and Harrow match will be forgotten, but England will still be England." In every particular, he got it wrong. The Stock Exchange was actually the engine for social revolution. The force behind the creativity that transformed as well as shattered English culture was capitalist, not socialist. But perhaps his most English error was in assuming that whatever was destroyed, something coherent would take its place. It hasn't. The task of the next generation, once this squall of upheaval has subsided, will be to piece some meaning back together again.

ANDREW SULLIVAN

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the government succeeded in defeating a bill—introduced by a Conservative member—that would have modestly amended the Official Secrets Act. That is the legislation that makes any unauthorized disclosure of official information—down to the cost of a cup of tea in the Cabinet Office canteen—a criminal offense.

Meanwhile, the courts continue to do the government's bidding. With a few honorable exceptions, the judges have endorsed every contention by the government that the disclosure of information would harm national security. Judges are now considering for the third or fourth time whether to allow newspapers to publish extracts from *Spycatcher*, the book that Brits in Washington ship to their deprived friends at home, much the way they mailed nylon stockings after the war. Expect the ban to continue. We are reaching the point where any expression of opposition—by academics, by the press, by the church—is immediately considered to be "brave," as if we were a banana republic.

The danger for Britain in the next ten years is that the economic changes of the last decade will be attacked as a direct cause of illiberality, and we will be back on the old treadmill of slow growth and stagnation. That would mean a betrayal of the enormous creativity and flair that the British economy now shows. The task for Britain is to reconcile our new economic condition with our new politics. That may call for a radical rethinking of the constitutional settlement, one that looks to American constitutional structures (without any illusions as to their total efficacy) as a model. We should be thinking of a bill of rights, of a separation of Parliament from the executive, of how to find a role for an independent judiciary.

As the economic boom matures, the clubland gossip is all about how Britain has grown strong again, just as America's economic drive looks systematically weaker. But if we no longer need tutelage in economics, we surely do in liberty. In the early 1960s, Harold Macmillan said to John Kennedy that he wanted the British to play the role of the wise Greek to America's thrusting Romans. It was a silly, facile remark. But over the next ten years it would be nice to think that something of the converse might happen.

THE UNBEARABLE LIGHTNESS OF BEING A CONGRESSMAN

BY FRED BARNES

IN HIS FIRST race for the House of Representatives in 1980, John P. Hiler of La Porte, Indiana, was pure Reagan revolutionary. He was 27, single, and working in his family's foundry business. Three years out of the University of Chicago Business School, where he had attended classes of supply-side economist Arthur Laffer, Hiler was inflamed with the idea of overturning a half century of government interference with the economy. He wanted to change the world.

His opponent was the third-ranking Democrat in the House, John Brademas, who had represented the 3rd Congressional District in northern Indiana for 22 years. Brademas boasted about how much he had delivered in federal programs for the district, especially for its largest city, South Bend. Hiler took the opposite tack. He advocated the Kemp-Roth tax cut, urged dramatic reductions in federal domestic spending, more deregulation, and a military buildup. For nine months in 1980, Hiler gave the same campaign speech, and he repeated the same line over and over. "I'd rather cut down on the tax money flowing from South Bend to Washington than increase the grant money flowing from Washington to South Bend." He defeated Brademas decisively, 55 percent to 45 percent.

For a year, Hiler, one of 53 Republican freshmen, seemed the epitome of a new breed of GOP House member, styled on the model of former Representative David Stockman. He was not only eager to slash programs for the poor, but also ready to cut corporate welfare and unwilling to seek pork barrel spending for his own district. When Mayor Roger Parent of South Bend asked him in 1981 for help in obtaining a federal loan guarantee for a $150 million ethanol plant, Hiler rebuffed him. Nor did Hiler leap into action when the United Auto Workers sought his aid in persuading the Bendix Corporation, South Bend's largest employer, from moving its facilities to the Sun Belt. Capital, Hiler explained later, "should be allowed to move freely."

By early 1982 Hiler was housebroken. He was transformed into a drudge, a workaholic with little time for what he calls "macro issues" and an obsession with the parochial interests of his district. In short, Hiler became like nearly everyone else in the House. His attention turned to the small and sometimes demeaning business of politics—schmoozing, touching as many bases as humanly possible, patting backs, and staying visible in his district.

Nothing concentrates the mind of a congressman like fear of losing his job. Hiler's trouble began with a front-page story in the *Wall Street Journal* on January 7, 1982. It featured Hiler as a "Reagan robot," an unswerving follower of Reaganomics in spite of a deepening recession. The story was reprinted in the *South Bend Tribune*, causing Hiler endless trouble. Democrats used the article and Hiler's refusal to seek money for the ethanol plant against him.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Campaigning during a recession was miserable. "You couldn't find a smiling face anywhere you went to campaign," Hiler says. "By one o'clock you didn't want to get out of the car." He won, 53 percent to 47 percent, but only after Dan Rather announced erroneously on CBS on election night that Hiler was the first GOP casualty.

A new, more conventional Hiler emerged. "I've learned a lot about how to handle an issue like [the ethanol plant] if it comes up in the future," he says. He opposes Urban Development Action Grants, but doesn't hesitate to plug for UDAGs for his district. He sought one to finance a parking garage in Elkhart last year. He also tried unsuccessfully to change the rules for UDAGs to make it easier for South Bend to get one to develop the abandoned Studebaker automobile plant. When the Army switched its contract for five-ton trucks from AM General in South Bend to a company in Ohio, Hiler pushed for an emergency National Guard contract for the trucks. That failed, but he got the Pentagon to move forward the production of trucks at AM General for foreign sale.

National and foreign issues are almost off Hiler's agenda now. Despite his kinship with conservative bomb-throwers such as Representative Newt Gingrich of Georgia, he hasn't joined their Conservative Opportunity Society. "It just demanded a commitment of time, with my election status, I can't give," he says. Hiler won by 47 votes in 1986, and faces another tough re-election this year. He sends out a "Weekly Report" to constituents that often discusses a national issue, but his press secretary, Linda Heacox, usually writes it. The two committees he is on—Banking and Small Business—take up some economic issues that interest Hiler, but as a Republican in a Democratic Congress, his role is small. Hiler's schedule in Washington is so full of meetings with constituents and lobbyists, receptions, and trips to the House floor for votes that his administrative assistant, John Gautier, tries to set aside an hour late in the day (6 p.m. to 7 p.m., or 7 p.m. to 8 p.m.) for national issues. But that often falls through. "When you run and get elected, you think you're going to be working on very large problems of the world," says Hiler. "You get a heavy dose of reality. It turns out you work on a lot of things very close to home."

NOTHING IS CLOSER to home than the manufactured housing industry, which produces prefabricated homes that cost $20,000 to $25,000. It is probably the biggest industry in his district, and Hiler spends ten percent of his time, whether in Washington or Indiana, on matters related to it. Of course, a nice chunk of his campaign contributions comes from people in the industry. Over-regulation is a ubiquitous threat, he says, and would make prefabs too expensive. "It's affordable housing," says Hiler. "Lookit, everybody can't drive a Cadillac. Somebody's got to drive Chevettes."

Protecting a local interest may not be high-minded, but it is what most House members concentrate on. Republican Frank Wolf of northern Virginia spends his time on curbing noise at National Airport and working on local highway issues. Democrat Charles Rose of North Carolina defends the tobacco program. Nonetheless, Hiler insists that working on manufactured housing issues is the most satisfying thing he's done in Congress. And he doesn't wink when he says it.

In 1987 Hiler battled threats to the industry from both the Department of Housing and Urban Development and Congress. Ironically, Hiler wants to retain federal regulation of the industry, whereas HUD wants to hand it over to the states, which might adopt tougher regulations, as part of Reagan's new federalism. But Hiler says this would confront the industry with a hodgepodge of state regulations and make national distribution unfeasible. Hiler was tireless in lobbying HUD. "I've had more individual dealings with Hiler's office or Hiler-related matters than anybody else," says Chris Lord, a HUD liaison with Congress. Hiler's efforts worked. HUD has now all but given up trying to get rid of regulatory authority.

For Hiler, the crowning achievement of 1987 was one tiny part of the housing bill passed last December. For years there has been pressure to apply the same HUD energy standards for single-family housing to manufactured housing. No way, says Hiler. This would drive up the price, reduce sales, and threaten jobs in Elkhart, the manufactured housing center in his district. In April Hiler got the provision knocked out when the bill was marked up in the House Banking subcommittee on housing, on which he is the senior Republican. Then Democrat Mary Rose Oakar of Ohio put it back in when the full Banking committee took up the bill. That version passed the House. But Hiler got it watered down during a Senate-House conference. He inserted language that says HUD standards should be "cost-effective" and "ensure the lowest total of construction and operating costs." This prompted Hiler's office to release a triumphant press release in November. "Hiler Amendment Saves Jobs in Elkhart," it said.

THERE ARE exceptions—if you were on the Iranamok committee, say, or Ways and Means at tax reform time—but the daily routine of House members is mindlessly hectic and stupefyingly dull. At most, only three dozen representatives out of 435 have any real power. All but a few of these are Democratic leaders or committee chairmen. There are nearly 200 subcommittees, and a lot of what they do is duplicative. Hiler wastes little time on the Small Business Committee, for example, because anything it handles will also be worked over by other committees. Much of what the House does is makework. Republican Amo Houghton of Corning, New York, was shocked at the inefficiency of the place when he arrived last year, fresh from serving as chief executive officer of Corning Glass. "You don't resolve issues here," he says. "You circle around them."

The level of mail and requests for help from constituents is intimidating. It took a quantum leap in the early 1980s. In Hiler's office the number of letters rose from 250 to 300 a week to 500 to 600. Hiler answers every one and personally signs his responses. He says he spends about five or six percent of his time on mail alone. He has four legislative assis-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tants in Washington, all of whom work on mail. He also has an administrative assistant, a press secretary, a computer specialist, an intern, an office manager, and a receptionist. They work on mail too. If Hiler is away for four or five days, it takes him several days to catch up with the backlog of correspondence. Hiler uses the responses his aides draft as a "briefing system" on issues he might not be keeping up with. This way, says administrative assistant Gautier, "he's never stumped" when talking to constituents. In his district office in South Bend, there are six staffers who devote themselves solely to "casework," requests for help of all sorts. Recently the office celebrated its 10,000th case.

AT RANDOM, Gautier picked out a typical day in Washington for Hiler—last September 15. The night before, he'd appeared at Academy Night at a high school in his district for those interested in an appointment to a service academy. Hiler spent the night in his duplex in La Porte, then drove 30 miles to South Bend the next morning to catch a 6 a.m. plane to Washington. It arrived at 9:35 a.m., and his first appointment, markup of a minor bill in the Banking Subcommittee on Consumer Affairs and Coinage, was at 10 a.m. At 11:30 a.m. he met with manufactured housing lobbyists for the umpteenth time. At noon the House convened and he had to be on the floor for a spell. From 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. he was double-booked. He gave a 15-minute speech to the Electronic Funds Transfer Association, which was meeting for lunch in the Rayburn House Office Building, and then rushed to a session of the Republican Policy Committee.

At 2:30 p.m. representatives from the American Medical Oxygen Sales Corporation dropped by, and at 3 p.m. a fellow from the Coin Dealers Association arrived. At 4 p.m. Hiler met with the Indiana delegation to the International Council of Shopping Centers. At 4:30 p.m. he recorded a public service announcement in the House Recording Studio for the Osteoporosis Society. At 5 p.m. there was a meeting of the Society of Statesmen, a group of GOP House members. And from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. he was double-booked again at competing receptions on Capitol Hill, one for the Mississippi Bankers Association, the other for the National Restaurant Association. "Typically he'd stop by and see if there's anyone from Indiana there, then run to the other and see," says Gautier. "If there weren't, he'd go home and see his kids." Hiler was married in 1984 and has two children, Alison, 2, and Caitlin, 1. His family lives in a house in McLean, Virginia.

When the House is in session, Hiler spends four days a week in Washington, three in his district. Last year he spent 125 nights in Indiana. This year he figures it'll be 175. Last year he was in the district, away from his wife and kids, three out of five weekends. This year it'll be five out of six. As you might guess, he spends a lot of time in airports. He makes about 40 round trips a year between Washington and Indiana. Until two years ago, he kept a car at Midway Airport in Chicago, flying there and driving two hours to the district. Now there's a direct Piedmont flight (stopping in Dayton) that leaves Washington at 7 a.m. and returns at 3:10 p.m. For a congressman, a direct flight to the district is heaven.

I SPENT two days with Hiler in Indiana. He covered better than 150 miles on January 13. He left La Porte and drove 50 miles to Elkhart for a high school speech at 8:55 a.m. Then he went to a TV station for a 30-minute taped interview. At noon he spoke to the Elkhart Lions Club, giving his standard address about "five facts" (such as, 70 percent of women with school-age children are working). Few congressmen are great public speakers, and Hiler is no better than average. For them, it's more important to be seen than heard.

After lunch he drove to Warsaw, Indiana, for three events. At 2:15 p.m. he presented a flag that had flown over the Capitol to a nursing home for the retarded. At 3 p.m. he conferred with Mayor Jeff Plank and promised to help him get a Commerce Department grant to study the feasibility of a sterilization plant in Warsaw. At 3:45 p.m. he met with the president of the Warsaw Chamber of Commerce about its day-care program. Then he drove to his office in South Bend, stayed 15 minutes, and drove to La Porte for an interview with reporter Todd Dickard of the *Herald Argus News* at 7 p.m. After 30 minutes for dinner (fried perch and rice), he addressed the La Porte Jaycees. He took off his gray suit coat, rolled up his sleeves, loosened his striped tie, and repeated his "five facts" speech. He wasn't through until after 10 p.m. He never had found a spare moment to read a newspaper. In Washington he reads the *Wall Street Journal* and the front page of the *Washington Post*. He hasn't time to look at the *New York Times*.

A third of Hiler's time in the district is devoted to fund-raising, says his aide Reg Wagle. That may be more than most House members, but it's not too far out of line. The average House incumbent now spends upward of $400,000 on re-election. Even entrenched incumbents often build up war chests, if only to scare off challengers. Since he's from a marginal district and narrowly survived a 77-day recount in 1986, Hiler is braced for a tough challenge from Tom Ward, the guy he beat by 47 votes. His goal is $600,000 (he spent $336,768 in 1986), enough for television advertising at the supersaturation level. "That's $50,000 a month, $12,000 a week, $2,000 a day," he says. To raise it, he was up at 5 a.m. on January 14 and at a breakfast 50 miles away at an Elkhart restaurant by 7:30 a.m.

The pigeon was Scott T. Chapman, president of a company that produces custom vans. Two Hiler allies, banker Tom Dusthimer and manufacturer Bob Deputy, had invited Chapman, and they came along to the breakfast. They chatted about business and someone told an off-color job about Lee Iacocca before Hiler made his pitch. Hiler said he'd been too laid-back in 1986. "Our campaign was oriented toward not losing, instead of winning. I realize now we can't do that."

"You're right," said Chapman. "In business, too."

Hiler said he can't afford to let his opponents go unanswered in 1988. "You can get away with that in a lot of districts, but in this district you can't. You take no prison-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ers. You have to be aggressive. You have to be creative. Sometimes you have to use humor. Sometimes you have to be nasty." He said he wants to be able to hit back in television spots within 48 hours after a charge is made. Ward, his opponent, will be made "to eat everything he said in the past." His campaign has "books that thick" of research on Ward, he said, holding his thumb and finger two inches apart.

Dusthimer turned the conversation to money. Ward got $78,000 from labor unions in 1986, he said. Democrats, Deputy added, "have made it clear they're going to spend whatever it takes" to win Hiler's seat. And Hiler said the National Republican Congressional Committee has told him "to plan on Ward spending between $400,000 and $500,000."

"Jesus," said Chapman.

"When a challenger gets $400,000 or $500,000, they can throw up a lot of stuff," said Hiler.

"I understand," said Chapman. "It's the cost of doing business."

Just then, Chapman is summoned to the phone. "Have you told him a figure?" Hiler asked his allies. "Should we hit him with one now?" No, they said, we'll get to that later.

When Chapman returned, Hiler said, "I hope we can have your financial support."

"I presumed that was coming," Chapman said.

"I presumed you knew I wasn't here just because I didn't have a place to eat breakfast," said Hiler.

Say, one of his friends said to Hiler, "what's the most you can give? Up to $2,000?"

"Yes," said Hiler.

Chapman replied, "If you're asking for the order, sure, I'll sign that order."

At four similar meetings and a lunch, Hiler raised another $4,000, maybe $6,000. He made it back to South Bend in time to catch the 3:10 p.m. plane to Washington.

ON THE NIGHT of January 13, Hiler and an aide got lost while looking for a Jaycees meeting. At one point, they wandered into a church during a service. The small congregation looked up and the pastor said, "Come on in." Hiler balked. "I'm sorry. I think we're in the wrong place," he said. "No, you're not in the wrong place," the pastor said. "You're in the Lord's house." Embarrassed, Hiler backed out. He hadn't been recognized.

For all the honor of being elected every other year, the job of U.S. representative isn't all that ego-satisfying. Few House members are household names in their districts. "If you're in it for public adulation," said GOP Representative Vin Weber of Minnesota, "you'd better be in the Senate." True, there's satisfaction in having people listen to your opinions on various subjects. You get a reserved parking space at National Airport. And the pay—$89,500—isn't bad. But after three or four terms, virtually any House member could double his salary as a lobbyist.

A new study of Congress by the Center for Responsive Politics found House members to be frustrated and dissatisfied. Too much busywork and fund-raising, they complained, and too little personal time. Representatives who went to Jamaica in January to be lectured by Sovietologists worried that if they returned with tans they might be criticized for languishing on the beach. Hiler can scarcely find time to read a book. He likes to read on plane rides, but on a recent trip his briefcase was stocked with reports and studies. There were such page-turners as "Glass-Steagall Act: Current Issues Affecting Bank Underwriting, Dealing & Brokerage Activities" and "International Competition in Services" and "Mandate for Change: Restructuring the Banking Industry."

The House is a nice steppingstone. Presidents John Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Richard Nixon started their political careers there. Eight House members won Senate seats in 1986. Some are so desperate they'll leap at anything. Republican Ed Bethune of Arkansas left in 1984 to run an unwinnable race for the Senate. Democrat Bill Boner of Tennessee quit last year to run for mayor of Nashville. He won. Hiler flirted last year with the idea of seeking the lieutenant governorship, the best statewide job he'd have a shot at. His path to the Senate is blocked. Indiana has two relatively young Republican senators, Richard Lugar and Daniel Quayle.

Hiler's wife, Catherine, says she's "amazed" they got married in the first place. The year they met, 1981, "37 of 52 weekends, he was gone." Their life, she says, "isn't normal. One of the things that helps is I worked on the Hill." She was minority counsel for the House Government Operations Committee, then executive director of the Federal Mine Safety Review Commission. She quit in 1984 to campaign for her husband, and was deputy director of the White House Conference on Small Business in 1985 and 1986. Now she rears the two children.

"In a sense, I have my own life," she says. "I have total responsibility for the children." Her daily routine lasts from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., when the kids go to sleep. "When Jack comes home, he has to fit in. . . . At times, I do wonder if it's worth it. That happens when Jack's gone a few weekends in a row."

Their social life is negligible. Even when she goes back to La Porte with him, they have little time together. "Sometimes he can fit an hour in a day to see the kids," she says. At political functions, she has to stay clear of relatives. "I'm not there to talk to my family, nor is Jack." What makes the life palatable for Catherine Hiler is her belief "that it matters for him to be there. I do believe it. I do believe it."

SO DOES HILER. He still lives off the exhilarating days in 1981 when deep budget and tax cuts passed the House. He can describe in detail the June day when the reconciliation bill narrowly cleared the House. "You watched the votes going up [on the tally board]. Winning by three votes, you felt you'd made a difference."

By 1985 Hiler was getting depressed. Conservatives were winning few votes in the House. He thought about quitting, but never came close. The study by the Center for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Responsive Politics found that, despite their complaints, few House members want to leave. "You grow up believing members of Congress are people held in high regard," says Weber. "It's hard for people to imagine when they get that job that it isn't what it's cracked up to be. So they hold on to it." There's always a rationale for running again. In 1986 a seemingly easy re-election was reason enough for Hiler. But having won by 47 votes, he's all the more determined to run again in 1988. The truth is, he's hooked.

It's worse than being there.

GETTING THERE

BY ROBERT KUTTNER

IF ANY JOB is more thankless than being in Congress, it is trying to get there. In 1986 a record 98.4 percent of incumbents defending their seats were re-elected. Just six challengers toppled sitting representatives, a new low.

There are several reasons Congress increasingly is becoming a permanent bipartisan government of safe incumbents. Gerrymandering is more sophisticated today. With computers, a "safe district" tends to stay safe. In many state legislatures, when congressional districts are redrawn a tacit bipartisan incumbents' conspiracy puts the Republican voters in the Republican districts and the Democratic voters in the Democratic ones. Moreover, in recent years, incumbents have devoted ever-increasing numbers of their ever-increasing staffs to the task of servicing constituents. Because of this effort, the average voter may deplore Congress as an institution but generally likes his own representative. Perhaps most important, as campaign finance has become more systematic, lobbies of all stripes put ever more of their money into incumbents (who have legislative influence), and relatively less into challengers (who don't).

Challengers of every persuasion and both parties have an uphill battle, but the hardest case is a liberal Democrat challenging an incumbent Republican. Take, for example, David Landau. Please. Landau, a former civil liberties lawyer and 1984 Gary Hart national issues director, is running hard in Pennsylvania's 7th District to take back a suburban Philadelphia seat that a Republican grabbed in 1986 after it had been held by a Democrat for 12 years. Landau, presumably, is just the sort of Democrat the party needs. He is young, articulate, good on the traditional bread-and-butter issues, but also appeals to the younger, less ideological Gary Hart-type voter. In 1986, with a late grass-roots primary campaign and virtually no money, he came within a few hundred votes of unhorsing the official Democratic nominee. His performance sufficiently impressed the party establishment that this time he has no primary opposition.

Landau also has little money of his own, and herein is the real tale. To run for Congress today, a challenger needs heaps of money. The incumbent, Curt Weldon, will raise upward of $650,000, which will pay for polls, television and radio spots, staff, get-out-the-vote, and so on. Landau, to date, has raised about $26,000. To the new kingmakers of politics, the money men, money is a measure of who is to be taken seriously. And this creates a perfect Catch-22 for challengers. To be credible, you need money. But before you can raise the money, you of course need to be credible. Which unfortunately takes money.

"I spend nearly all of my time raising money," confesses Landau, who comes from a well-known but not independently wealthy family. He got $1,000 from his grandmother. He put a second mortgage on his house. The senior partner in his law firm, Larry Hoyle, raised a few thousand dollars for him. But for Landau, and other liberal Democratic challengers like him, the main pit stops that will make or break his campaign for Congress are these three: the AFL-CIO; the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee; and the National Committee for an Effective Congress.

These three groups, taken together, unlock perhaps a quarter of a million dollars in campaign finance, without which a Democratic challenger simply can't run a real race. These PACs can contribute only $5,000 each to a candidate, but they influence the decisions of dozens of other PACs and individuals. There are two other potential pit stops for congressional candidates: business PACs and pro-Israel PACs, but these are largely closed to challengers like Landau because business PACs almost never oppose Republican incumbents and Israel PACs don't pick fights with incumbents who are generally pro-Israel, even when the challenger might be preferable.

Thus, in the crucial early months of an election year, when a candidate ought to be doing all the other things that politics entails, a Democratic challenger is compelled to become obsessed about fund-raising, and to persuade three key groups of kingmakers to take him seriously. Of these, perhaps the most crucial is the AFL-CIO Committee on Political Education (COPE) and its committee on marginal races, made up of the 20 or so most influential labor PAC directors. The marginal committee decides which incumbents are in sufficient trouble to warrant major extra financing, and which challengers have a serious shot. "If you don't get on the COPE marginal list," says Landau, "you can forget about big money."

That's because local unions are unlikely to give serious money to a candidate whom their parent unions aren't taking seriously. And other liberal groups, though they may not necessarily agree with the AFL-CIO on all the issues, are generally unwilling to put much money into a race that labor has written off as hopeless. In a good year, perhaps 25 challengers are fortunate enough to make COPE's marginal list, and perhaps 15 of these get serious money.

When a candidate makes his pitch before the COPE marginal committee, according to one of its members, the committee usually advises him to come back when he has $50,000 to $100,000 and a poll. "Money indicates local sup-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

port," says another member of the committee. "If they can't raise money in their own district, they can't get elected."

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee tends to reason along the same lines. It has far less money than its Republican counterpart, and it hates to squander what it has on lost causes. Under the prodigious Representative Tony Coelho, its chairman from 1980 to 1986, the DCCC succeeded in browbeating corporate PACs into giving more money to Democrats, but most of it went to Democratic incumbents. (Business PACs do suddenly become very generous in helping liberal challengers retire their campaign debts once they are elected; they also throw money at the odd conservative Democrat.) The DCCC, thanks to Coelho, will spend heavily only on a challenger who seems to have a real shot.

"The DCCC is a lot better than it used to be," says Al Jackson, the director of the National Committee for an Effective Congress, "but it is still mainly an incumbents' committee. Its first obligation is to see that Democratic incumbents get re-elected." Jackson is the key staff person for the oldest of the liberal PACs, the NCEC, which many other liberal issue PACs look to for political intelligence on which challengers should be taken seriously.

In mid-January the NCEC hosted a meeting where Landau made his pitch to liberal issue groups, including environmentalist, public interest, feminist, anti-war, civil rights, and senior citizen organizations, each of which can raise a few thousand dollars for a challenger deemed to have a real chance. "Landau is terrific on the issues," says Jackson. "Unfortunately, he still has a way to go to convince people to get involved in a big way."

THE REASONS ARE instructive. Though Pennsylvania's 7th District was represented between 1974 and 1986 by Bob Edgar, a progressive Democrat (who stepped down to seek a Senate seat), Edgar is widely seen as unique. A member of the big Watergate class, he managed to hang on to perhaps the most Republican seat that the Democrats picked up in 1974. He did it by building a far-flung grassroots organization and by becoming a hero to environmentalist and peace groups, while personally coming across as reassuringly mainstream. "The rap on Landau is that Bob Edgar is the only Democrat who can ever carry that district." And second, says Jackson, "Curt Weldon isn't quite Jesse Helms." Weldon has a relatively moderate voting record for a Republican, though a fairly conservative one for a Northern suburban district. Third, Weldon has endeavored to neutralize labor. He has been shrewd enough to cultivate an alliance with the AFL-CIO building trades, voting for their priority bills, and he recently carried water for the Teamsters, helping to circulate a congressional letter urging that the Reagan Justice Department back off its threat to put the union in receivership.

On the other hand, Weldon voted against child-care legislation, against environmental legislation, and for the Reagan budget priorities, for Star Wars, for a constitutional balanced budget amendment, and to cut further Amtrak funding, in a district heavily dependent on railroads. Observers also consider Weldon less than politically adroit. Recently his finance chairman tried to plant a story about Landau's wife, Stephanie Klein. The story badly backfired. Klein, a lawyer who uses her maiden name, had taken a job clerking for a local judge. The Weldon campaign circulated the story that she had gotten a patronage job "under a disguised name." When Landau pointed out that his wife had always used her own name, the Weldon aide replied, "Real women use their married names"—a quote that was widely published and ridiculed throughout the district.

NONETHELESS, because this race is not (yet) considered one of the ten or 15 most statistically probable for a Democrat to win, Landau's effort to raise the money, which in turn might allow him to demonstrate wider appeal, remains problematic. Republican challengers have far fewer such worries. In 1986, in Pennsylvania's 11th District, where Republicans thought they had a good chance of unseating Democratic incumbent Paul Kanjorski, the 26-year-old Republican challenger raised almost $1.4 million. In the race for the then-open seat in the 7th District, which Landau is now contesting, the Democrat, Bill Spingler, raised just $166,600 (to Weldon's $617,000), and won slightly under 40 percent of the vote. That poor showing, in turn, has made it harder for Landau to persuade prospective donors that the race is potentially competitive. Al Jackson observes, "Personally, I would never run in a district that hadn't gone at least 52-48 last time. I couldn't keep making the pitch and keep getting turned down. There are so many ways to say no. You don't have a professional campaign. You don't have a nationally recognized pollster. You don't have the name recognition. You haven't raised enough money."

And so money continues to corrupt politics, creating permanent incumbencies, posing special hurdles for Democratic liberals, and depressing voting turnout. (Why bother to vote when the incumbent has a permanent lock on his seat?) The American legislative system is becoming more like the legislatures of Bulgaria or of Tammany, where there is one party and it is the party of incumbents. This has to be bad for liberal democracy, as well as for liberal Democrats.

The political dominance of the notorious "special interest groups," it turns out, has less to do with the overreported influence of ideological activists in presidential primaries, and more to do with the plain realities of campaign finance. Unless you happen to be independently wealthy (as more and more candidates for public office unfortunately are), even an independent-minded Democrat such as Landau is thrown back on the usual suspects. "The system forces you to spend far too much time playing the Washington game," he says. "And when I try to raise money in the district, they ask, 'What does Washington say?' " Landau, who grew up in suburban Haverford, recalls paying his first round of fund-raising calls, on friends of his parents. One said, "Why does a nice boy like you want to do this? Why don't you go out and make some money? Then you can run for Congress." □

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

An Oddly Cut Gem

Reviewing *El Sur* is a peculiar and painful business. This Spanish film is excellently made in every particular. The director is Victor Erice, whose only previous feature was *The Spirit of the Beehive* (1973). I missed it, but I've read enough about it in journals and books to make me writhe at my omission and to long for his next. Now *El Sur (South)*,

El Sur (South)
(New Yorker)

done in 1983, arrives at last, and now I'm even unhappier that I missed Erice's first film. (I've missed half of his ten-year output!) From the first moment and without waver throughout, *El Sur* is the work of an unusually accomplished, thoughtful artist. Yet I left the film feeling that, lovely as it is, it is oddly unfulfilled.

It's a puzzlement, unhappily clarified by something I read later. In *The International Film Guide 1984* José Luis Garner writes that we are not seeing the whole film because the whole film was not made. Garner calls *El Sur*, rightly, "a story marked by a very pure, almost crystallized emotion." Then he says:

> The film, though, does not respond to what the director wanted as only half the script has been shot: to reduce the economic risk, the producer called off the shooting as soon as he considered there was sufficient material. The editing has therefore been subject to the requirements of reconstructing, as much as possible, an incomplete story. An unusual situation that accentuates the singularity of this film, without doubt the best in Spain this year.

This, then, is not the same situation as with, say, Visconti's two films *The Leopard* and *Ludwig*, which were cut before they were released. The missing material in *El Sur* was never made. But I underscore two points: Garner's high opinion is justified, and no kind of deceit can be imputed to anyone connected with the film's release, here or abroad—this is the film that Erice presented as *El Sur*.

Then is this film, constructed under duress, worth seeing? Yes, and again yes. I've cited Garner's report, first, because it exists, and second, because it helps to answer possible questions after the beautiful experience of *El Sur*. Here is what we see. In 1957 a doctor, his wife, and their 15-year-old daughter live in northern Spain, near a walled town where he works in a hospital. The daughter, Estrella, is the narrator of the story (from time to time we hear her subsequent, adult explications along the way), and most of the film is seen from her point of view. We see her father as she remembers him through childhood until adolescence; we hear how she thinks of him subsequently; we sense the reciprocal love between her and this dark, reclusive man.

As an eight-year-old she learns about his practice of a kind of necromancy, his use of a small, hand-held pendulum for water-dowsing and for other pursuits anomalous in a doctor. She knows that he came from the south of Spain, that he left there before she was born and never returned. As a child she learns, too, that his departure from the south had something to do with the outcome of the Civil War. At the end, when she is 15, she is off—after a shocking climax—to visit the south for the first time in her life, to see her grandmother and to follow her one clue to her father's past. Always there has been a tacit bond between her and this shadowed man; at the end it persists.

Two elements are skimpy in the screenplay. First, the weight of matters that brings about the climax is too light. Second, we feel that political matters, related to the Civil War and its aftermath, are only sketched, that they are meant to have more importance to the doctor and his past. Both these elements, I'd guess, are connected—or are meant to be.

But *El Sur* is, nonetheless, exquisite. For instance, the opening sequence. The screen beneath the title and credits is black. There is no sound. Then dawn touches a window, fills the window, opens up the room that we are in. We see Estrella asleep. Outside a dog begins to bark. Then we hear her mother calling her father. No reply. We hear running, we hear the mother calling the maid. The camera remains with the 15-year-old Estrella, who wakes, sits up, takes a box from her pillow, removes her father's pendulum, and plays with it as the hubbub continues outside. This opening, superbly photographed (as is the whole film) by José Luis Alcaine, establishes Estrella as the core of the story and establishes, too, that there is a link between her and her father that others do not know.

The film flashes back from that opening and ultimately returns to it. That sequence not only encloses the story, it establishes Erice's taste. In every aspect, the ascetic yet not dry selection of shots; the quick fades to black after most sequences that treat them as units of memory, beads on a string; the terseness with which he moves narrative and draws character—all these prove the taste of a director who is repelled by platitude but too gifted to replace platitude with eccentricity.

All of the cast create richness; the three principals give the film its center.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Broadcast News. Not nearly as Swiftian as it starts out to be, but this comedy of life and love among the TV newscasters has gleaming dialogue and deft playing. (Reviewed 2/1/88)

The Dead. John Huston's last work respects Joyce's story without encompassing it. Anjelica Huston as Gretta, however, is not to be missed. (12/21/87)

Housekeeping. A delicate, seemingly comic but searching film about spirits of the frontier still hovering over the Northwest. Excellently acted and directed. (1/18/88)

Ironweed. For those—many, I hope—who don't want to miss anything by Meryl Streep and Jack Nicholson. They are vivid as drunken bums in this otherwise unrewarding tale. (1/25/88)

SK

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The eight-year-old Estrella, Sonsoles Aranguren, makes her curiosity endearing. The 15-year-old Estrella, Iciar Bollan, has dignity and understanding. The scene in which her father takes her to lunch at the town's luxe hotel is like chamber music between the two. He is played by the Italian actor Omero Antonutti, familiar from the Taviani films *Padre, Padrone* and *The Night of the Shooting Stars*. Antonutti is compelling as the father, a man who is taciturn, not because he is unfeeling but because he cannot bear to speak of what is within.

Erice wrote, some years ago:

> Sometimes I think that for those whose childhood contained an inherent vacuum, for those of us born immediately after a civil war like ours, the elders were often just that: a vacuum, an absence.

The Spirit of the Beehive, I've read, deals with that theme: two small sisters involved symbolically in the war's aftermath. *El Sur* is obviously related in theme and perspective to the earlier film. It would be as silly to miss *El Sur* because of its compression as it would be to miss *The Magnificent Ambersons* because RKO fiddled with Welles's work. It's even sillier—criminally silly—of the film world to permit the talented Erice to make only two films in ten years (presuming he wanted to make more) and then to harry him about completing the second.

Insincerity And Authenticity

Oscar Wilde
by Richard Ellmann

(Knopf, 680 pp., $24.95)

Oscar Wilde was born at 21 Westland Row, Dublin (not the best address), on October 16, 1854. He died in the Hôtel d'Alsace, Paris, on November 30, 1900. The novelist George Moore said of him: "I do not think anybody would have troubled about him if the Marquess of Queensberry had not written him a postcard." A harsh judgment, but not absurd: if Wilde had not, on March 1, 1895, sought and obtained a warrant for Queensberry's arrest, there would have been no trials, no imprisonment, no *Ballad of Reading Gaol*, no disgrace. Our interest in his life would have coincided, as it now does not, with an interest in his plays. He would belong to the history of the English theater, but he would not be a continuing issue, involving morals, homosexuality, law, Victorian society. We would comfortably compare him with Shaw, distinguish his comedies from those of Congreve, and enjoy the plays as they come. We would certainly not say of him, as Richard Ellmann does in his biography, that "Wilde is one of us."

A word about the postcard. It is generally agreed that Wilde, who married Constance Lloyd on May 29, 1884, remained heterosexual until he felt it necessary, sometime in 1886, upon discovering that the syphilis he had contracted from a prostitute at Oxford was not entirely cured, to discontinue having intercourse with his wife. In the same year he met Robert Ross, who seduced him into homosexuality. Wilde, as Ellmann remarks, "was not attracted to anal coition, so Ross presumably introduced him to the oral and intercrural intercourse he practiced later." In June 1891 (though a date a few months earlier had been suggested), Wilde met Lord Alfred Douglas, one of the Marquess of Queensberry's sons, and fell in love with him.

Mutual fidelity was neither expected nor required; each of the lovers was promiscuous. But the relation persisted, in England and on vacations in Italy and Algeria. The Marquess demanded that his son bring the scandal to an end. Alfred refused. On February 28, 1895, one of the porters at the Albemarle Club in London handed Wilde a postcard that the Marquess had left for him ten days before. The message, hard to decipher, reads: "To Oscar Wilde posing Somdomite [sic]." The culmination of several blows from Queensberry, Wilde took the postcard as the ultimate provocation. "I don't see anything now but a criminal prosecution," he wrote to Ross a few hours after he had received it. On March 1 he obtained a warrant for Queensberry's arrest on a charge of criminal libel.

The case came to trial on April 3, and two days later Queensberry was acquitted. But the evidence produced at the trial was so damaging to Wilde—it described him soliciting more than 12 boys, of whom ten were named, to commit sodomy—that he had to be arrested and charged under Section XI of the Criminal Law Amendment Act, 1885: "Any male person who, in public or private, commits, or is a party to the commission of, or procures or attempts to procure the commission by any male person of, any act of gross indecency with another male person, shall be guilty of misdemeanor, and being convicted thereof, shall be liable, at the discretion of the court, to be imprisoned for any term not exceeding two years with or without hard labor." On May 1 the jury disagreed and a new trial was ordered: it couldn't have been avoided, since the names of several men in high place, including Lord Rosebery, had been mentioned in evidence. If Solicitor General Lockwood had dropped the case, he would have been accused of a cover-up. The new trial began on May 20; five days later Wilde was found guilty and sentenced to two years' hard labor. He served his full term. Released on May 19, 1897, he went immediately to France, then to Italy, Sicily, Switzerland, and back to Paris, resuming the homosexual life that had sent him to jail.

Wilde was much concerned with biographical commentary. Reviewing Joseph Knight's biography of Dante Gabriel Rossetti in 1887, he said: "We sincerely hope that there will soon be an end to all biographies of this kind. They rob life of much of its dignity and its wonder, add to death itself a new terror, and make one wish that all art were anonymous." In "The Critic as Artist" he wrote: "Every great man nowadays has his disciples, and it is always Judas who writes the biography." Alfred Douglas was Wilde's Judas, publishing lies until death stopped him. And another of Wilde's associates, Robert Sherard, demonstrated in several books that he did not understand anything, least of all his friend Wilde. But there have been decent biographies: by Hesketh Pearson in 1946, a better one by H. Montgomery Hyde in 1976.

Now Wilde has found in Richard Ellmann a most affectionate disciple. The new biography is the work of many years. Ellmann interrupted his research from time to time to publish other books, but this biography was his main commitment since 1959, when he published his life of Joyce. There are signs of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

constraint in the new book. Ellmann told me several years ago that the biography of Wilde would be a much longer book than that of Joyce; in the event it is about 200 pages shorter. I assume that when Ellmann became ill (he died last year of Lou Gehrig's disease), he knew that he would have to finish the work even at the cost of leaving a few issues unresolved.

If Ellmann had lived, I think he would have expounded and justified his sense of Wilde, offering more evidence in its favor. He regarded Wilde as a good man, warmhearted, generous, the best of company, as I am sure he was. On more doubtful ground, however, he exonerates Wilde from the charge of corrupting the boys he paid for sex: "They were already prostitutes." Wilde "got to know the boys as individuals, treated them handsomely, allowed them to refuse his attentions without becoming rancorous, and did not corrupt them." It's a poor argument. Wilde took part in the corruption, and maintained it.

I should say that Ellmann's biography is written, as one would expect, with consummate elegance and grace. It is fluent, often witty, always urbane. Most of the episodes are narrated so compellingly that the question of dissenting from Ellmann's sense of them hardly arises. But I think that his recourse to standard notions about Victorian society is often facile. He believes that Wilde was brought down by the hypocrisy of Victorian law and government. The second trial, he writes, was "a farce." "The society whose hypocrisies he had anatomized now turned against him: Victorianism was ready to pounce." The book ends with a ringing assertion: "Now, beyond the reach of scandal, his best writings validated by time, he comes before us still, a towering figure, laughing and weeping, with parables and paradoxes, so generous, so amusing, and so right."

The last word, "right," has a footnote sending the reader to *Other Inquisitions*, where Borges, more judicious than Ellmann on this theme, refers to "the provable and elementary fact that Wilde is almost always right." *The Soul of Man Under Socialism*, according to Borges, "is not only eloquent; it is just." The miscellaneous notes that Wilde lavished on the *Pall Mall Gazette* and the *Speaker* "are filled with perspicuous observations that exceed the optimum possibilities of Leslie Stephen or [George] Saintsbury." These claims are valid. But Ellmann goes beyond Borges: in his version, Wilde was *always* right, and the people who brought him down were monstrous hypocrites, true epitomes of the society they maintained.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

The trouble is that such an argument can be sustained only by a more fundamental one: that an artist should never be subject to the law or charged with a crime. (Besides, the argument runs, if every man who engaged in homosexual practices were to be thrown into jail, Victorian clubs and drawing rooms would have been emptied.) But Ellmann ignores the fact that Wilde brought the law upon himself. The police took no interest in his private life until irrefutable evidence came to light in the case that Wilde brought against Queensberry. The truth is that Wilde did an incredibly stupid thing; he should have ignored Queensberry's postcard and every other such missive. There is no evidence that Victorian institutions of power had their evil eye on him.

Ellmann concedes that Wilde was imprudent, but he exculpates him otherwise at every turn. Exemplifying what Lionel Trilling once referred to as "the modern tendency to locate evil in social systems rather than in persons," Ellmann glosses over the fact that Wilde lied both in and out of court. He lied to the lawyer he employed to defend him. On November 8, 1893, he wrote to Lord Alfred's mother urging her to send her son to Lord Cromer in Cairo for five or six months, for the good of his health. It is now clear that the scheme was a stratagem that Oscar and Alfred concocted together to remove Alfred, at his mother's expense, from the scene of an imminent scandal. It involved a schoolboy named Philip Danney, who went from Ross's bed to Douglas's and extended his trip to Wilde's, before returning to London to sleep with a woman at Douglas's expense. The boy's father got wind of these activities and wanted to prosecute every offender, but he was dissuaded by his lawyer: "They will doubtless get two years, but your son will get six months." Wilde's name was kept out of it, but Douglas had to be spirited out of the country. Egypt was a haven just far enough away. All this is clear thanks to Ellmann's own research; the scandal is one of several new items in his book. But he doesn't remark how shoddily Wilde emerges from it.

The new materials in Ellmann's book are not immediately obvious, but they

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"These are the reasons I don't read that magazine Spy:

SPY is new, and I don't like new things.
It calls itself The New York Monthly.
It makes fun of Republicans.
It makes fun of Democrats.
It makes fun of Donald Trump.
SPY names names, and that's just not nice.
There's too much writing in SPY.
SPY doesn't tell me what kind of cheese to buy, or where to meet chicks.
SPY doesn't know when to quit.
Who wants a sassy, funny magazine, anyway?"

SPY
MAGAZINE
Smart. Fun. Funny. Fearless.

He may not read SPY, but you should. It's the most talked about magazine in America. Subscribe right now and save 32% off the newsstand price. *And with a No-Risk Guarantee: you may cancel your subscription at any time, and we'll rush you a full refund on all unmailed copies.*

• •

☐ YES! Please send me one year of SPY—10 jam-packed issues—for only $16.97.

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____ APARTMENT _____

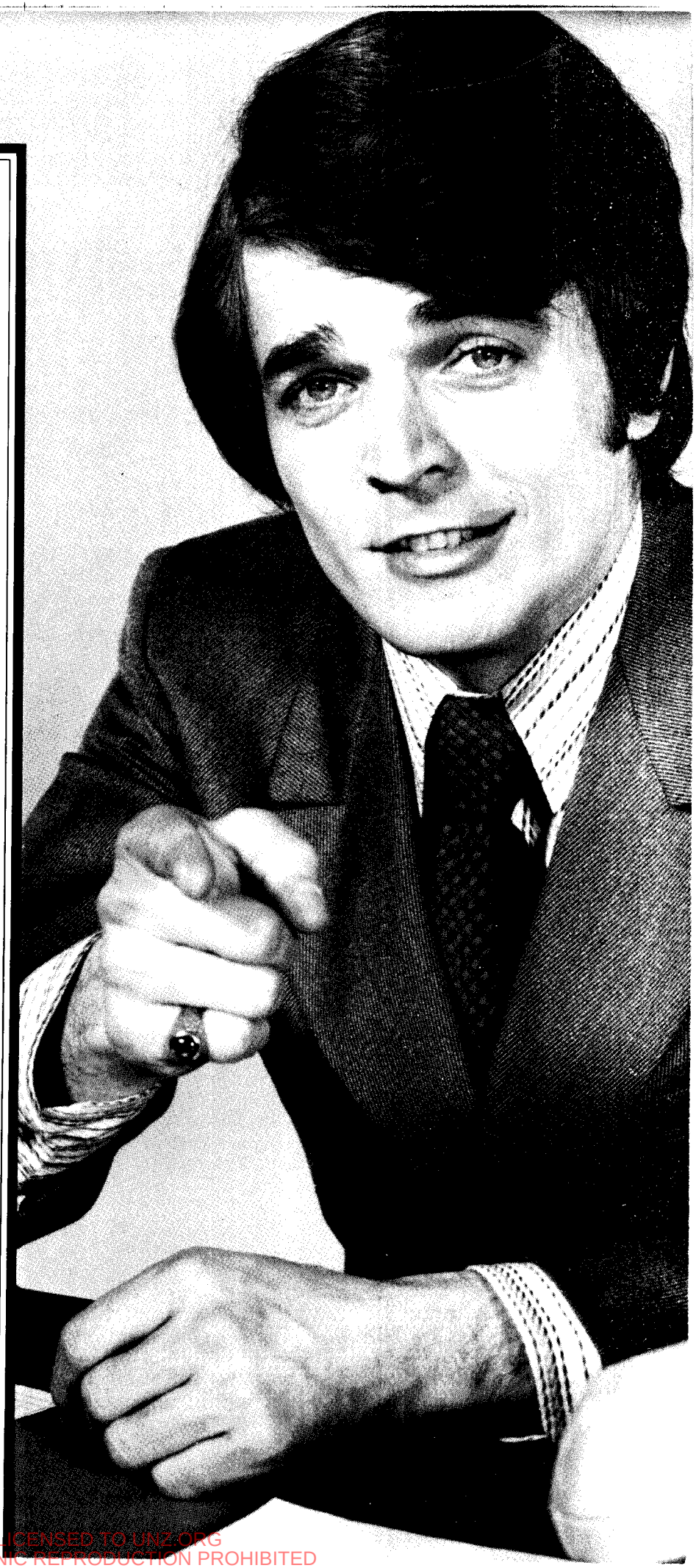
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

☐ My check is enclosed ☐ Bill me

Mail to SPY, 295 Lafayette Street, NYC 10012

Please allow 6 weeks for delivery to begin.

782N1



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are worth a search. There is amassed detail about Queensberry, including a new letter that shows him in one of his coarsest moments. Montgomery Hyde's explanation of Queensberry's vendetta against Wilde—that his eldest son, Drumlanrig, killed himself to avoid the disclosure of his involvement in a homosexual tangle with his master, Lord Rosebery—is accepted and developed in Ellmann's book. Queensberry was determined that, having lost one son to homosexuality, he wouldn't lose another one in the same cause: the interpretation seems plausible, especially when we reflect that Queensberry was rich enough to survive any indignity and demented enough to risk it.

Ellmann treats the trials themselves pretty briefly; they have already been fully described in several books by Hyde. But Wilde's unfortunate wife, Constance, is more persuasively described by Ellmann than by any of his predecessors. She turns out to have been a woman of notable courage and spirit, indeed of magnanimity. When Wilde's mother died in 1896, Constance set out from Bordighera to bring the sad news to Wilde in prison, and to comfort him in his distress. The meeting between Constance and Oscar is one of the most touching episodes in the entire story. It may be true, as Ellmann thinks, that Constance had fallen in love, in the summer of 1894, with Arthur Humphreys, the manager of Hatchard's bookstore; if the affair was brief, one hopes that it was also gratifying.

THERE ARE still a few gaps in the biography. How did the notorious "Hyacinthus" letter from Wilde to Lord Alfred ("I know Hyacinthus, whom Apollo loves so madly, was you in Greek days") get into Queensberry's hands? The relation between Wilde and W. E. Henley, culminating in Henley's attack on *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* in 1898, needs more elaborate study than Ellmann gives it; it touches upon political and imperial motives not otherwise clear. Henley was an ardent imperialist, and he convinced himself that Wilde and his decadent friends were a threat to the empire. One of his most famous poems begins:

> What have I done for you,
> England, my England?
> What is there I would not do,
> England, my own?

No wonder that he loathed Aestheticism, and took pride in publishing, as editor of *The Scots Observer* in 1890, Charles Whibley's attack on *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. Wilde, in turn, had a low opinion of Henley as a writer ("his prose is jerky, spasmodic, and he is incapable of the beautiful architecture of a long sentence"), but the relation between them is more interestingly complex than I have made it seem; they rose to moments of affection in the intervals of conflict.

Then there is the question of the cause of Wilde's death. Ellmann says:

> His ear developed an abscess: he had otitis media. This the doctor now diagnosed, according to Turner, as a "tertiary symptom" of syphilis. It led directly to meningitis, "the legacy of an attack of tertiary syphilis," as Ross said.

But the matter is not at all clear. Ellmann takes Ross's word for it, and there is a letter from Reginald Turner to Robert Sherard on the same lines. But there are studies by competent medical people such as Terence Cawthorne and McDonald Critchly that tell a different story, that the cause of death was indeed a disease of the middle ear, complicated by an abscess in the left lobe. There was also cerebral meningitis. But I am persuaded, in this instance, by Hyde rather than by Ellmann: "It is practically certain that neurosyphilis was in no way responsible for [Wilde's] terminal illness."

THESE ARE DETAILS. But to a biographer God is in the details; larger matters can often be left to issue from local episodes. Still, sometimes, as in the case of this biography, they need to be a little teased out. Ellmann does not raise many of the important questions. His sense of Wilde established itself, I think, at a fairly early stage of his writing, and it seemed a sufficient task to represent a personality, a distinctive presence in the world. When Ellmann does treat Wilde's ideas, he takes them more seriously than they deserve. I can't see Wilde, as a thinker, in the company of Nietzsche and Pater; his thinking was a series of flourishes, not a body of thought valuable beyond its occasion. Ellmann's claims for Wilde are excessive; and they are sustained more by the warmth of Ellmann's affection than by any irresistible arguments in their favor.

Thus Ellmann doesn't go into the important question of Wilde's neo-aristocratic pose. In *Some Versions of Pastoral*, William Empson glanced at it, remarking that the Byronism of the dandy, as in Baudelaire and Wilde, stood for the idea "that crimes are the fate of the artist merely because of his greatness, and that to commit hubris is only to admit that one is the tragic demigod." Everything depended on what the dandy appeared to be taking for granted. Empson says that "the aristocrat is essentially like the child because it is his business to make claims in advance of his immediate personal merits." The best the aristocrat can do, "if actually asked for his credentials, since it would be indecent to produce his pedigree, is to display charm and hope it will appear unconscious, like the good young girl."

BUT WILDE'S pedigree wasn't impeccable. His father was Sir William Wilde, but the title wasn't hereditary; he was knighted for his work as a doctor, especially for his discoveries in diseases of the eye and the ear. Oscar's mother was a poet, a flamboyant personality, a Nationalist whose ardor was compatible with attendance at the Lord Lieutenant's Christmas Ball. Her verses were evidently not a threat to the empire. But she was not a fool. Indeed, her influence on Oscar was immense and, as Ellmann shows, much to his good. But her reputation wasn't serious enough to provide her son with a pedigree. Oscar was a social climber, an Irishman out to conquer London, and while it often appears that he found the conquest easy, many of his quips seem designed to intimidate, in advance, people who might indeed ask to examine his pedigree. Of course he gave a good performance, an extended run of the show he devised; but it's hard to be quite convinced by it, as Ellmann evidently was, especially if one adverts to the sense that a touch of vulgarity was never far from the declared appurtenances of a superior tone.

Wilde's version of aristocratic hauteur, as Empson puts it, "leaves a rather bad taste in the mouth because it is slavish; it has something of the naive snobbery of the high-class servant":

> Whistler meant this by the most crashing of his insults—"Oscar now stands forth unveiled as his own 'gentleman' "—when Wilde took shelter from a charge of plagiarism behind the claim that a gentleman does not attend to coarse abuse.

Indeed, Whistler's dealings with Wilde were largely a matter of showing that Wilde's claim to the superior graces was a fraud.

There were other ways of engaging with Wilde. One could refuse to let him enter one's home, as Mrs. Henry Adams did when he came to Washington in Jan-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

uary 1882, copious with introductions, on a lecture tour. "I have asked Henry James *not* to bring his friend Oscar Wilde when he comes; I must keep out thieves and noodles or else take down my sign and go West." Not that James was a friend of Wilde's; he told Mrs. Adams, after a visit to Wilde, that the fellow was (her words, admittedly, not necessarily James's) "a fatuous fool, a tenth-rate cad."

Ten years later, when Wilde was a successful dramatist and James in the process of recognizing himself as a failed one, he described the (by then, standard) way of taking Wilde. Having attended the opening night of *Lady Windermere's Fan* on February 20, 1892, and deeming the play "infantine," he reported that "the pit and gallery are so pleased at finding themselves clever enough to 'catch on' to four or five of the ingenious—too ingenious—*mots* in the dozen, that it makes them feel quite 'decadent' and *raffiné* and they enjoy the sensation as a change from the stodgy." As for "the virtuous journals" and their response to Wilde: their tone, James said, "makes me despair of our stupid humanity":

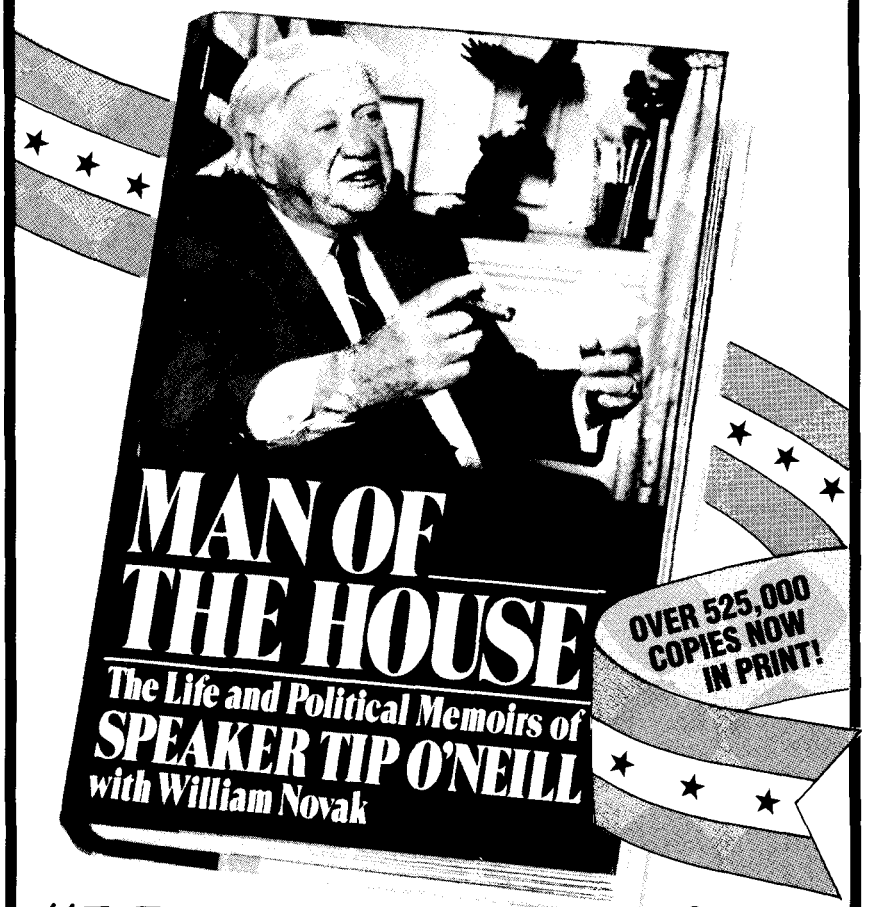
> Everything Oscar does is a deliberate trap for the literalist, and to see the literalist walk straight up to it, look straight at it, and step straight into it, makes one freshly avert a discouraged gaze from this unspeakable animal.

JAMES IS a good witness to call, not merely because he was a superb social analyst and had, as Richard Poirier has shown, a remarkable comic sense, but because the structure of his feelings would have enabled him to understand Wilde's. I refer not just to his homoerotic desires, but to his emphatic sense of the consequences, many of them rightly acceptable, of being a visible presence in the social world. James's presentation of Gabriel Nash in *The Tragic Muse* (1889-90) illustrates most of the attributes that he thought could be permitted in an aesthete. Such a person might go so far as to assert that "my only behavior is my feelings" and to regard himself as "a fine consequence." There was no harm in that, only a limitation: the price one had to pay for such lucidity. The social world was large and various enough to house an aesthete or two. But they, in turn, would have to observe the social decencies and put up with the constraints.

Much of this comes out, but more explicitly, in James's consideration of the merits of John LaFarge, artist and aes-

"SPELLBINDING"
—WILLIAM SAFIRE, front cover, *New York Times Book Review*

The Landslide Bestseller!



"Marvelous reading
...he's a great storyteller." —DANIEL SELIGMAN, *Fortune*

"Splendid, wonderfully entertaining."
—JOHN KENNETH GALBRAITH, *Boston Globe*

"A gem of a memoir...
He knows more stories than Aesop, but for political junkies of the past 50 years, O'Neill is better."
—GEORGE V. HIGGINS, *Newsday*

"Such fun to read...
Pure Tip. Anecdotal, earthy, unpretentious and casual."
—RICHARD COHEN, *Washington Post*

"Fascinating observations and revelations."
—ROBERT DALLEK, *Los Angeles Times Book Review*

"A delightful, warm, frequently funny inside view."
—ROGER MUDD, *USA Today*

16 pages of photos
A Book-of-the-Month Club Selection

Now at your bookstore
RANDOM HOUSE

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

thete, in *Notes of a Son and Brother* (1914). Twenty years after the imprisonment of Wilde, James thought that LaFarge (certainly not Wilde, Whistler, or Beardsley) was the true "embodiment of the gospel of aesthetics." In a clear reference to Wilde, James said of the young LaFarge:

> Those more resounding forms that our age was to see this gospel take on were then still to come, but I was to owe them in the later time not half the thrill that the LaFarge of the prime could set in motion. He was really an artistic, an aesthetic nature of wondrous homogeneity; one was to have known in the future many an unfolding that went with a larger ease and a shrewder economy, but never to have seen a subtler mind or a more generously wasteful passion, in other words a sincerer one, addressed to the problems of the designer and painter.

James's references to homogeneity and sincerity are enough to show what form a more elaborate distinction between Wilde and LaFarge as types would take. If he were writing now, he would find it harder to persuade his readers that these terms of praise are self-evident.

TRILLING REMARKED how easy it has become to patronize sincerity, and "the sharp diminution of the authority it once exercised." He had rueful and ambiguous feelings about the displacement of sincerity in favor of authenticity, supposedly "a more exigent concept of the self and of what being true to it consists in, a wider reference to the universe and man's place in it, and a less acceptant and genial view of the social circumstances of life." And Wilde seemed to Trilling immensely important in this consideration, not merely because he could sustain comparison (as Mann claimed, too kindly) with Nietzsche, but because he anticipated so clairvoyantly the modern system of valuation by which, as Wilde said, "what people call insincerity is simply a method by which we can multiply our personalities." The method is now called the American system of role-playing. (It was denounced, to no visible avail, by Adorno in *The Jargon of Authenticity*.)

Many of Wilde's contemporaries, including Yeats, found his notion of multiplied personalities a gratifying release from prescribed axioms of sincerity. James didn't, because he regarded homogeneity as the only reliable mark of a person, the only proof that one was indeed in the presence of an achieved form of humanity. He, too, recognized the risk of vulgarity. Reading Ellmann's book, I am struck by the risks appallingly taken, and by the vulgar consequences. These arise whenever Wilde trades—slavishly indeed—for his own advantage in the very system of values he claimed to scorn.

IT IS WRETCHED to find him, in Reading Gaol, petitioning the home secretary for his release on the grounds that such actions as those of which he was found guilty were, according to the best scientific authorities, "diseases to be cured by a physician, rather than crimes to be punished by a judge." Every sentence of the petition is a lie, starting with its reference to Max Nordau's *Degeneration* (1893), in which Wilde's public demeanor was adduced as a symptom of disease. Wilde did not believe that his homosexuality was a disease; it is disgusting that he went through the pretense. If you set yourself up as a mocker of the bourgeoisie, it is vulgar to pretend that you accept its morality and are ill in not being able to live up to it. Ariel should not tell lies, or say that Caliban is right.

Wilde's bad faith affected his plays too, except for *The Importance of Being Earnest*. The plays were supposed to achieve at large what his paradoxes accomplished in the miniature form of their sentences: to disturb the equilibrium of a system, to embarrass conventional values with their own stodginess. Wilde's sentences ("All bad poetry springs from genuine feeling") set speech upon a course of disruption. But if you restore such sentences to their standard form, replacing (in the one just quoted) "bad" by "great" or "good," you feel a fool; you can't ever again sink to rest on that particular cliché.

Wilde's plays were supposed not only to give bourgeois morality a good shaking, but to transform its terms into those of art, a much superior address. But *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892), *A Woman of No Importance* (1893), and *An Ideal Husband* (1895) are halfhearted in this aim. They give too much credence to the moral issues (as in the cheating and blackmail plot of *An Ideal Husband*) that they claim to transform. Untransformed, untranscended, the old values remain in place at the end, and make the last-minute resolutions seem a mere sleight-of-hand. The plays leave an awkward residue, they are issueless and inconclusive, not because the audience insists on staying complacently middlebrow, but because Wilde hasn't shown them an image more alluring than their own.

In *The Importance of Being Earnest*, however, the awkwardness is removed. Wilde achieved his most assured artistic success not by showing that moral issues could be "sublimed away," the disgraces of a plot appearing as rough places on the way to graces and mobilities in a transfigured social scene, but by disclosing a social and linguistic utopia. It offers a world, as Ian Gregor said in an influential essay, "fit for the dandy to live in," and fit, too, for anyone with the wit to see that the dandy's way is superior to Everyman's not only in charm but in justice.

Ellmann well remarks that *The Importance of Being Earnest* is "all insouciance where *Salome* is all incrimination." The insouciance is the delighted tone in which surfaces and appearances are appreciated for what they are, without any insistence that they are merely clues to something else. "It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances," Lord Henry tells Dorian Gray: "The true mystery of the world is the visible, not the invisible." The utopia of *The Importance of Being Earnest* is every charmed form of life that does not have to be earned: it is not a gift, but the context from which every gift flows. Like Nietzsche and Pater, Wilde believed that the Victorian age could maintain only an ironic sense of itself. To fail to maintain it was to fall into the mud of received ideas.

ONE COULD BE, in any case, only a spectator of gone deeds. The question was, Could a spectator take the harm out of an obviously congealed scene by cultivating his own art of seeing? It was Wilde's achievement in *The Importance of Being Earnest* to transform a predicament, a state of belatedness, into a fresh world, by declaring that he himself, with a wave of his wand, would make it all fresh. He does this by showing that appearances, trustworthy or not, may be appreciated for their beauty. The play has marriages, intrigues, and double lives: only the attributes of these states are altered. The marriages are made to seem to tremble upon a name, the intrigues upon a syllable. But these matters, the heavy stuff of morality in life as in the theater, yield themselves in this play to aesthetic determinations. Wilde is Prospero here, and the English language is his Ariel.

To see morality yielding to art is at least a gratifying hallucination, effected most elegantly in the third act of *The Im-*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

portance of Being Earnest. There are glimpses of it in the earlier plays, as in *Lady Windermere's Fan*, when Mrs. Erlynne says to Lord Windermere: "I lost one illusion last night. I thought I had no heart. I find I have, and a heart doesn't suit me, Windermere. Somehow it doesn't go with modern dress. It makes one look old."

BUT THE third act of *The Importance of Being Earnest* is Wilde's jewel, his greatest moment as a utopian. Cecily and Gwendolen are at the window of the morning-room at the Manor House, Jack and Algernon are in the garden. Cecily says: "They have been eating muffins. That looks like repentance" (an interpretive act that must be a comic transformation of poor, demented Ophelia's essay in the distribution of justice: "There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray you, love, remember. And there is pansies, that's for thoughts. . . . There's fennel for you, and columbines. There's rue for you, and here's some for me; we may call it herb of grace o' Sundays. You may wear your rue with a difference"). When Algernon flourishes a plausible excuse for having pretended to be Worthing's brother, we get this little sequence:

> CECILY (to Gwendolen): That certainly seems a satisfactory explanation, does it not?
> GWENDOLEN: Yes, dear, if you can believe him.
> CECILY: I don't. But that does not affect the wonderful beauty of his answer.
> GWENDOLEN: True. In matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity is the vital thing. Mr. Worthing, what explanation can you offer me for pretending to have a brother? Was it in order that you might have an opportunity of coming up to town to see me as often as possible?
> WORTHING: Can you doubt it, Miss Fairfax?
> GWENDOLEN: I have the gravest doubts upon the subject. But I intend to crush them. This is not the moment for German skepticism.

The deflection of every prescribed relation between cause and consequence: this is Wilde's carnival. The morality of sufficient ground is elegantly mocked in the retention of an exacting syntax. And the syntax, in turn and in its turnings, mimes a moral argument, while it blithely sets aside the gravitas that such an argument would entail.

Among Wilde's several analogues for such a transformation, I mention two. In Shakespeare, he preferred the late romances to the tragedies. "Give me *A Winter's Tale*," he said to Yeats. "What is *King Lear* but poor life staggering in the fog?" In art, he approved the Japanese forms of disconnection. "The Decay of Lying" has Vivian saying to Cyril:

> I know that you are fond of Japanese things. Now, do you really imagine that the Japanese people, as they are presented to us in Art, have any existence? . . . If you set a picture by Hokusai, or Hokkei, or any of the great native painters, beside a real Japanese gentleman or lady, you will see that there is not the slightest resemblance between them. . . . In fact the whole of Japan is a pure invention.

The passage issues from a late Victorian fascination with Japanese art as an alternative to dreary realism. It is similar to Beardsley, Whistler, and other artists of Wilde's generation. It also anticipates Roland Barthes's account of Japan in *Empire of Signs*. Barthes was edified by the willingness of Japanese writing, and of Japanese society, to see itself emptied of the demands of meaning. He was exhilarated to discover "the features with which Zen, in the exemption from all meaning, writes gardens, gestures, houses, flower arrangements, faces, violence." He speaks of "an excision which removes the flourish of meaning from the object and severs from its presence, from its position in the world, any tergiversation."

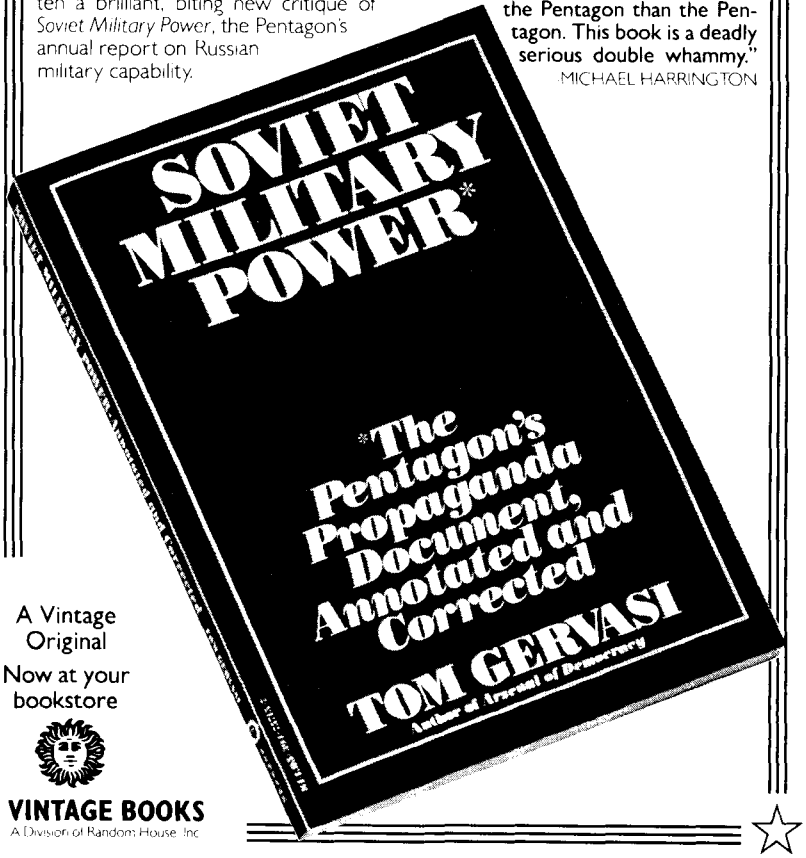
Tom Gervasi blows the Pentagon right out of the water.

"We are lucky to have Tom Gervasi to tell us the truth."
—ANDREW COCKBURN, author of *The Threat*

Tom Gervasi, author of the best-selling *Arsenal of Democracy*, has written a brilliant, biting new critique of *Soviet Military Power*, the Pentagon's annual report on Russian military capability.

Annotating page-by-page the Pentagon's lies, distortions, and half-truths, maverick defense expert Gervasi has produced a book no American citizen can afford to be without.

"What better witness against the Pentagon than the Pentagon. This book is a deadly serious double whammy."
—MICHAEL HARRINGTON



A Vintage Original
Now at your bookstore

VINTAGE BOOKS
A Division of Random House, Inc.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It is one of the Japanese attributes of *The Importance of Being Earnest* that we are given everything to look at and to admire, and nothing to worry about; surfaces beneath which, with respect to their meaning, we feel no inclination to pry. We enjoy the play not by interpreting it, not by looking through its signs for a separable meaning authenticated in the end by its having come to pass, but by following the trajectory of its speech. Each character is an agreeably personified form of behavior, a figure of speech that produces further figures in its vicinity. We attend to the play not as we would imagine persons in conflict and in confluence, but as we would participate in a vision, a joust of pure play, a masque of reason—and mercy.

DENIS DONOGHUE

Denis Donoghue holds the Henry James Chair of Letters at New York University. His latest book is *Reading America* (Knopf).

INSIDE SOLIDARITY

A Way of Hope
by Lech Walesa

(Henry Holt, 325 pp., $19.95)

Removed from the center of public attention, Poland has quietly entered a new phase of the gamble that began with the strikes of August 1980. Last November's referendum on economic and social reforms—a rather unusual exercise in a Communist country—resulted in a strange vote of non-confidence, or rather *désintéressement*, in a regime that to all appearances generously offered to transform itself beyond recognition. If only it had happened before Solidarity, one wishes, the government of General Jaruzelski might rightly have claimed to be the most liberal, the most enlightened regime in the history of communism. If only it had happened before Solidarity, people would have rallied behind the government's program to shift toward a market-oriented economy, democratize local governments, and establish non-Marxist political associations.

The point, of course, is that before Solidarity, and the trauma of martial law in 1981, it could not have happened; and after Solidarity it could not work. The Polish law of thermodynamics states that the amount of social energy, of expectation and disappointment, required to bring about any significant political change always dwarfs the result and makes it, at best, suspicious. In the present circumstances, the suspicion is deepened by the fact that until now the Polish government has persistently rejected the idea of direct dealings with the Solidarity leadership. There are voices today, even in the ranks of the Polish opposition, proclaiming that Solidarity, the trade union that tried to be everything for everybody, has lived out its days, that new forms of social innovation have to be worked out to meet new needs and new possibilities.

There is a consensus, however, that the experience of 1980-81 will cast a long shadow, one that must be conjured by anyone who wishes to rule the Poles with their consent and their cooperation. And one of the most frequently cited conditions of such cooperation, which is badly needed by the government in the face of the hardships and the deprivations awaiting Poland, is the "phone call to Walesa," a symbolic action by the authorities, like the call Mikhail Gorbachev made to Andrei Sakharov.

A Way of Hope, the autobiography of Solidarity's leader and the most notorious "private citizen" in Poland today, allows us a look at the roots of the movement that shook the Polish regime. As a historical document, though, Walesa's book is strangely incomplete and impressionistic. A reader not thoroughly acquainted with Solidarity's story will have some difficulty with the chronology of events, and with the larger political background. Walesa provides a dramatic picture of the confusion, indeed the disaster, of the coastal protests in 1970, which he calls "the last phase of social revolution on a national scale to have been inspired by old models we were taught to revere. In fact we sang the Internationale because there weren't any other songs capable of expressing the anger of a workers' insurrection in contemporary Europe."

But Walesa provides only a perfunctory discussion of the ensuing change in the workers' attitudes, of the role of intellectuals in the Committee for the Defense of Workers, or of the Movement in Defense of Human and Citizen Rights. Nor is there much about the formation of Solidarity's direct ancestor, the Free Trade Union movement. "During the '70s, Gdansk was like [a] network of streams, whose ideas would later merge to form a powerful current." It would be interesting to hear about the debates, the doubts, and the suspicions that must have been voiced at that time by the worker-activists.

There are numerous anecdotal details about the hide-and-seek game with the police, and about the delectable hoopla created by the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983, but only fleeting remarks about the often bitter ideological disputes and personality clashes that rocked Solidarity from its inception, and about the serious discussions of the union's performance and its future strategy after the crackdown of 1981. From Walesa's own account, and from others quoted in *A Way of Hope*, it is evident, for example, that the leader of Solidarity often quarreled with the leading figure of the pre-Solidarity opposition, Jacek Kuron. But what exactly was the substance of these disputes? What were their basic differences?

On the more controversial issues Walesa has a habit in his book of hiding behind other people's testimonies, behind official documents and excerpts from public statements. Of course some of his reticence may be precaution. The Polish government is untiring in its efforts to intimidate, discredit, or divide the opposition; an explicit discussion of some of its internal strains might become ammunition for the enemy. Yet the fact remains that almost everything concerning Solidarity is openly discussed in the numerous underground publications that still flourish in Poland.

Despite its flaws, *A Way of Hope* provides a glimpse of one of the most mysterious and fascinating factors in Solidarity's history: the figure of Walesa himself, or what might be called the Walesa phenomenon. Solidarity presented the world with one of the most extraordinary instances of leadership in modern times: a simple, scarcely educated man at

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the helm of a movement whose complexity and scope seemed to surpass the comprehension of the best minds that Poland could offer. Walesa's simplicity is deceptive. He is largely an enigma. In the voluminous literature on Solidarity, there are very few attempts to go beyond the usual tributes to his courage, integrity, and wit. But who is this man, for Solidarity and for Poland? What put him where he now so honorably stands? Is he a homegrown genius with unerring political instincts and a profound understanding of the historical moment, or an innocent clinging to a handful of noble clichés?

Those accustomed to the image of Walesa as an uncontested hero to millions of his countrymen may be surprised by the diversity of the opinions about his performance expressed by some of his closest aides, mentors, and associates, opinions that were gathered in a clandestine journalistic report issued shortly after the Nobel Prize in 1983 (*Each of You Is Walesa* by Antoni Pawlak and Marian Terlecki). Even according to his own account in *A Way of Hope*, Walesa was bitterly criticized, denounced, and even called a traitor by his fellow workers: once in a misunderstanding, in 1970, when he tried to negotiate the release of arrested strikers; and for the second time, more ominously, in August 1980, when he misjudged the size and the intention of the nationwide protests and, after three days, called an end to the shipyard strike. In the first instance he escaped the wrath through a back door. In the second he promptly declared the continuation of the strike "in solidarity," and pledged to be the last to leave the yard. Later, like Simon of Cyrene, he took upon his shoulders a wooden cross prepared as a monument to strikers killed in 1970, and dragged it alone to the shipyard's gate.

During the days of Solidarity's triumph, Walesa was accused of arrogance and arbitrariness, of unwarranted and secret diplomatic ventures. It was said that he was spoiled by success, that he was not revolutionary enough, that he was too soft in his dealings with the authorities, that he was not really up to the job. Shortly after the signing of the Gdansk, Szczecin, and Jastrzebie agreements that established Solidarity, Walesa was confronted by a group of influential activists led by the legendary Anna Walentynowicz, the "heart of the shipyard," who demanded his resignation. The ensuing silent war between Walesa and Walentynowicz, longtime friends and comrades-in-arms, was one of Solidarity's more embarrassing public secrets.

Attempts to demote Walesa, or at least to curb his powers, continued through the various stages of Solidarity's official existence. "In the eyes of some I was a usurper," he says in his memoir:

> These views only surfaced in the narrow circle of the group, never outside it in public meetings; the group's members would have been too afraid of the reaction in the shipyard and elsewhere within the independent trade movement. I knew I was supported unquestionably by the majority and could therefore ignore the views of the few, though I never for a moment forgot that these views existed.

Yet Walesa's popular base never really eroded, and even his critics grudgingly admitted to a curious fascination with the man, and with the confidence he evoked. It seems that for all of those engulfed by the Solidarity eruption, the electrician from the Lenin Shipyard was the custodian and the guarantor of the movement's identity, which was at stake almost from the beginning. Here was a man who embodied the union's many paradoxes and managed to provide at least a symbolic resolution of them.

Solidarity was a workers' rebellion against the "workers' state"—a giant joke played by history on Marxism. All the familiar features of the official ico-

All three volumes NOW available

LibertyPress/LibertyClassics

SELECTED WRITINGS OF LORD ACTON

in Three Volumes

By John Emerich Edward Dalberg-Acton
Edited by J. Rufus Fears, Boston University

Lord Acton was among the most significant figures and illustrious historians in the intellectual life of nineteenth century England. "*A major resource for academic readers — a collection like this has been needed for very many years — but also a work that will be useful for general readers concerned with some of the seminal ideals of modern western culture.*" Edward Norman, Cambridge University

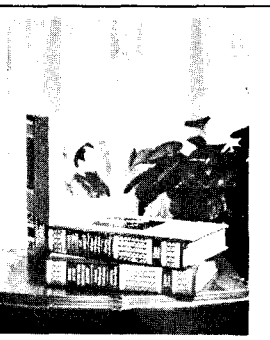
Essays in the History of Liberty
The unifying theme of Volume I is Lord Acton's famous work on the history of freedom.
588 pages Liberty Fund edition, 1985

Essays in the Study and Writing of History
Volume II covers Acton's distinguished study of history and his belief that it had to be impartial and based on moral judgment.
607 pages Liberty Fund edition, 1986

NEW

Essays in Religion, Politics, and Morality
Acton focuses on moral and political issues as they relate to religion and to liberal Catholicism.
776 pages Liberty Fund edition, 1988

Individual Volumes: Hardcover $15.00 Paperback $ 7.50
Three Volume Set: Hardcover $45.00 Paperback $22.50



Please send me: Selected Writings of Lord Acton

Quantity Ordered	Title	Edition	Price Per Copy	Total Price
	The Complete Set	Hardcover	$45.00	
		Paperback	22.50	
	Essays in the History of Liberty	Hardcover	$15.00	
		Paperback	7.50	
	Essays in the Study and Writing of History	Hardcover	$15.00	
		Paperback	7.50	
	Essays in Religion, Politics, and Morality	Hardcover	$15.00	
		Paperback	7.50	
			Subtotal	
			Indiana residents add 5% sales tax	
			Total	

We pay book postage rate. Please allow 4 to 6 weeks for delivery.
All orders must be prepaid in U.S. dollars.

☐ Enclosed is my check or money order made payable to Liberty Fund, Inc.
☐ Please send me a copy of your latest catalogue.

Name _____
Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Mail to: Liberty Fund, Inc.
7440 N. Shadeland Avenue, Dept W-114, Indianapolis, IN 46250

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nography—the rough hands and the angry faces of the exploited class; the spontaneous rallies and the political debates on the factory floor; the protest of desperate mothers unable to feed their families; the sudden sparkle of nobility in tired eyes—were suddenly turned against those accustomed to manipulating such images for their own repressive purposes. Solidarity skillfully, but with earnestness and conviction, worked this twist on the standard rhetoric. Despite its manifest rejection of communism, the movement instinctively followed some of the basic Marxist tenets of social justice and universal welfare, using them against their representatives in power. It would be safe to assume that for the majority of workers the "leading role" of the working class remained an uncontested axiom; Solidarity was just another proof that the *Weltgeist* rested on the shoulders of labor.

FOR THOSE with this view, "Lech" must have appeared as the best possible symbol of the providential role and the unlimited potential of the "simple man." He was the authentic man of labor activism, the man who was envisioned by the idealists of the 19th century and exalted in socialist realist novels, but who so far had not materialized in history. In his quick and witty (if often ungrammatical) language, Walesa would deliver their message to those who had tried falsely to appropriate it. There seemed to be nothing hidden or mysterious about him: no motivations, no ambitions or yearnings, that the masses could not immediately recognize as their own. He did not invite them into a strange new world, he did not ask them to transform themselves into something better. His very presence was a message that the task they took on themselves did not require any special talents or qualities, except those they already possessed through their work and experience. In *A Way of Hope* Walesa presents his own imagined portrait in the eyes of his fellow worker: "He's as stupid as I am, so he'll not be trying any tricks; maybe I'll even be able to put one over on him! But take this clever fellow, do we know what *other* people he's been getting his ideas from?"

Thus the "clever fellows," the advisers and the experts from the Committee for the Defense of Workers, the Young Poland Movement, or the Catholic Intelligentsia Clubs, were respectfully invited to take a back seat. They were never allowed to appear as spiritual leaders, or as ideologists of the movement. Their task was to provide technical expertise, and to serve as intellectual bodyguards during the more mischievous skirmishes with the Party wits. "We know what we want," Walesa is quoted, in Pawlak and Terlecki's report, to have said during one of his first meetings with "the experts," "but we lack experience and they may fool us. Help us so that we are not fooled."

BUT SOON things became more complicated. The movement—whose initial program, as Walesa says, "was fundamentally educational: its primary aim was to change people's way of thinking . . . rather than to overthrow existing institutions"—was forced to handle tasks for which it was not really prepared. There were complex technical issues on which the government stalled in every possible way. The questions of ideology, of the legitimacy of existing institutions, of the translation of the union's power into constructive action, could no longer be avoided. The role of the "intellectuals," in sum, was increasing, and Solidarity was becoming—in Walesa's own words—"a sort of Noah's ark with room for all, bringing the entire Polish nation into calmer waters." Some saw this as a process that could either disrupt the union from within or enable the government to manipulate its various interest groups from without.

Unable to accommodate all expectations and meet all demands, Walesa remained a symbolic center, a reminder of Solidarity's origin, a point of reference in moments of confusion and uncertainty. Was he a brilliant strategist? The question touches on another of Solidarity's paradoxes. In hindsight, it appears increasingly clear that the union was operating from the very beginning within an extremely narrow margin, which made any real, long-term strategy virtually unthinkable. This fact was vaguely realized, but it was also effectively denied in public debates and private reflections. The question of what to do if the regime (or its foreign sponsor) used its available means to quell the Polish upheaval was seldom asked, because there was no answer. No contingency plans were drawn up to prepare for a domestic or foreign assault; the government's steady and well-orchestrated resistance to the union was met with naive outrage as an inexplicable act of malevolence, not as the natural reaction of an opponent that must figure in any rational game plan.

Despite the appearance of unlimited power, Solidarity's raison d'être rested on a simple and, as it turned out, unjustified assumption: that the adversarial relation between the government and the society would somehow evaporate, that common goals would be recognized by both parties, that the mutual mistrust would disappear. At the same time, there was vindictive antagonism, especially in the movement's rank and file and the factory-level leadership. Anti-Soviet and anti-Communist sentiments were often vented at the union's meetings, though they were never adopted as the official platform. There was also more than a touch of contempt for "the Reds" who had (or so it seemed at the time) let power slip from their hands.

THE RESULT was that the "self-limiting revolution," as Solidarity was often called, sent conflicting messages to the government and to its own followers. One of them was: "Tremble O powerful, because we are The Million." The other was: "We are just simple guys who want a few simple things: justice, decent living conditions, a more pragmatic relationship between the rulers and the ruled. What's the big deal?" Oddly enough, Walesa managed to embody both these attitudes. As a charismatic tribune and a veteran of the tragic events of 1970, he was the personification of victory, of an ultimate historical justice. But his unflinching belief in the possibility of a "third way," his readiness, even in times of mounting tension, to sit down and talk things over "as a Pole with another Pole," seemed to guarantee that events would not get out of hand, that the conflict would be kept within manageable limits.

Solidarity is often compared to a children's crusade, or viewed as another romantic Polish uprising whose chief aim was a spectacular defeat and the creation of a legend. Yet the Walesa who appears in these pages is the antithesis of a holy crusader, of a fanatical leader eager for sacrifice in pursuit of a dream. Instead we see a man with a strong instinct for survival, who does not feel comfortable in extreme situations. It is important to note that Walesa's career as a workers' leader seems to have been launched by his deep abhorrence of violence. In 1970, having witnessed the preparations of the police and the army for a frontal attack on the striking shipyard, he frantically

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

started putting together a negotiating team to ward off bloodshed (in vain, as it turned out).

Despite his love of symbols and his dramatic rhetoric ("Our greatest strength is precisely our weakness—our living bodies and empty hands confronting tanks and nightsticks"), it was Walesa's prudence, rather than his bravura, that stood behind his more controversial decisions. When, in March 1981, the police brutally attacked a group of local leaders from Bydgoszcz, and Solidarity's National Commission called for a general strike, Walesa forcefully opposed the idea and left the meeting slamming the door. Eventually the strike was called off:

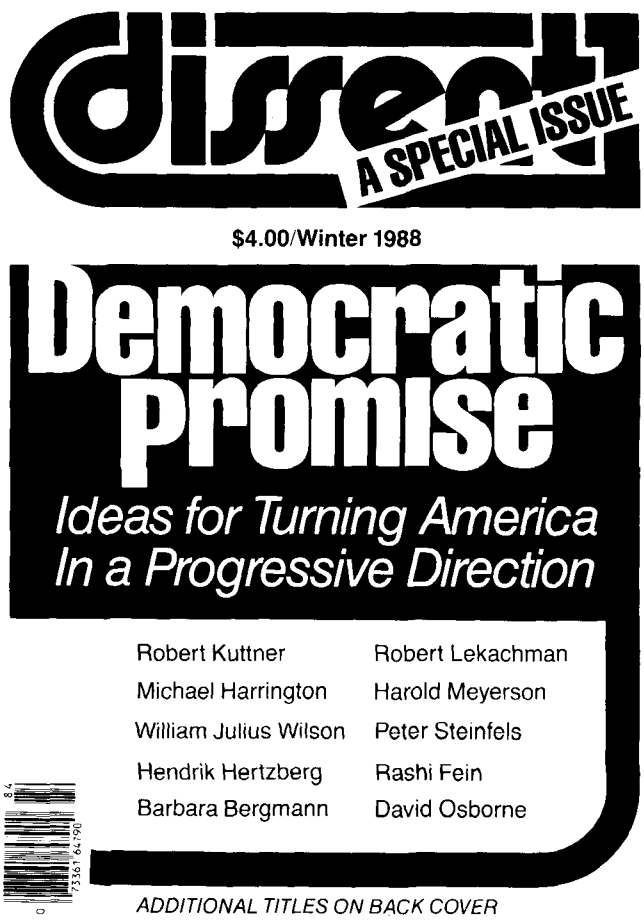
> I had the feeling of having defused an enormous charge of dynamite, of having staved off something that would have proved irreversible. Solidarity was never again to enjoy such a favorable combination of circumstances but, on the other hand, the risk of general confrontation with this desperate government had never seemed so fraught with danger.

And in November 1982, when the Temporary Coordinating Committee, Solidarity's governing body underground, called for a massive demonstration to commemorate the 64th anniversary of Polish independence, Walesa, still held in isolation by the security forces, decided to break his silence, and sent a conciliatory note to General Jaruzelski. The note was published only after the demonstrations failed to materialize, which gave the whole affair an appearance of capitulation. It is quite possible that alarming reports of massive mobilization on both sides were purposefully circulated among the security personnel in Walesa's place of imprisonment, and that the authorities knew from the start that the protests were bound to fail. Still, as he writes in *A Way of Hope*, Walesa continues to believe that he averted a major tragedy.

"When your opponent's turn comes around," he writes, in explanation of his guiding principle, "you have to know how to fall back, to think things over calmly, to keep up your morale and summon your resources to face whatever comes next." Walesa was falling back frequently, drawing harsh criticism from his radical associates, but he always stressed the distinction between "falling back" and a compromise. In truth, he almost never compromised on substance. He never sold issues or people for tactical gain. But he wielded the union's power with the utmost caution, as if he was aware (though he never admitted it openly) that an irresistible force may sooner or later meet an immovable object.

What eludes the reader of Walesa's memoir, however, is the private man behind the public personality—Walesa's hopes, his fears, his wishes. His childhood and youth, which stretched uneasily between the rural and industrial worlds, could serve as the model biography of some 80 percent of the Polish work force. And yet, at a certain point, his path parted with that of the rest of this generation, only to join it again when he became its leader. He admits to what he calls a non-fatalistic "idea of destiny." "Even if nothing in this world really depends on us, that shouldn't excuse us from putting all our efforts, in a dignified way, into finding the best possible solutions, and the most honest ones." Yet what exactly is the source of the strength and the self-confidence needed for the effort? What is the real place of religion in his life? Does he ever think that the eternal Polish dream of freedom, independence, and justice may be an illusion?

Occasionally, through the rather dry prose of the book, quite unlike Walesa's



A Liberal Program—

***if* there were a liberal candidate**

*
**

$4 at newsstands and bookstores or use coupon below (no billing)

DISSENT, 521 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10017

I enclose $_____ for _____ copy(ies) of the Winter 1988 issue.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip_____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

real speech, we can glimpse a different, more private man: a man troubled by a strange feeling of loneliness in the crowd of his followers and his large family; a man worried that he might be losing contact with his children; a man aware that existence is perhaps something larger, more engaging, more diverse than union meetings, public addresses, political squabbles. On the whole, however, the private Walesa remains blurred and hidden in his book. Perhaps Walesa himself is not particularly interested in him. "I know who I am and what I stand for," he observes curtly. "Now I am able to devote my time and energy to other problems."

JAROSLAW ANDERS

Jaroslaw Anders is a Polish writer living in Washington.

D. C. LAW

The Tenth Justice: The Solicitor General and the Rule of Law by Lincoln Caplan

(Knopf, 340 pp., $19.95)

The solicitor general holds a special place in American law. Of the high offices of government, only that of the solicitor general is required by statute to be filled by a person "learned in the law." The solicitor general's most visible responsibility is to represent the United States in litigation before the Supreme Court. It is the solicitor general who determines whether or not the government will seek to bring a case before the highest court, and once review is granted by the Court, what position the United States will put forth in its brief and argument.

The staff of the solicitor general's office consists of an elite group of fewer than two dozen lawyers who are among the most able attorneys to be found anywhere. Some of the most accomplished lawyers ever called to the bar have served as solicitor general, including Robert Jackson, Simon Sobeloff, Erwin Griswold, Thurgood Marshall, Archibald Cox, Wade McCree, and Robert Bork (who was praised even by his critics for the quality of his representations before the Supreme Court).

The justices depend on the SG to help them decide which few cases the Court will hear. Although normally the Court takes only one in 30 cases, it agrees to hear nearly 80 percent of those that come with the imprimatur of the solicitor general. Once a case is before the Court, the views of the solicitor general on how it should be decided are usually more influential than those of any other litigant. By tradition, the solicitor general has considerable independence from the political agenda of the administration in which he serves. The fact that the solicitor general has two offices—one located in the Justice Department, and one in the Supreme Court building itself—exemplifies the ambiguous yet exalted place the SG occupies.

The solicitor general is not expected to be just another "gun for hire" whose client happens to be the government. Donald L. Horowitz wrote in 1977 that "the solicitor general's office has had a long tradition of moderating the pursuit of untrammeled government interest in litigation by declining to . . . espouse certain positions even if they had some chance of success in court." One solicitor general declared, in a brief confessing error on the part of the government, "The United States wins its point whenever justice is done its citizens in the courts." In every administration this causes tension with federal agencies and Cabinet departments that wish their policy interests to be pursued in court with every conceivable legal argument. President Reagan's first solicitor general, Rex Lee, believed the solicitor general's unique standing depended on the idea that the positions taken by the SG represent "not merely the political views of the administration but the broad interests of the nation."

In a thoroughly researched and provocative new book, Lincoln Caplan argues that these traditions have been severely compromised during the Reagan administration. The charge is a serious one. The solicitor general, Caplan says, "once stood for the nation's commitment to the rule of law." As Caplan tells the story, political conservatives in the administration led by Edwin Meese and William Bradford Reynolds sought to politicize the office and use it to advance the ideological agenda of the administration. The debasement of this high standard of disinterested professionalism was, in Caplan's view, resisted by Solicitor General Lee, and then acceded to by his successor, the incumbent solicitor general, Charles Fried.

The great value of Caplan's work lies in his careful account of the decision-making process in the Justice Department on several major cases. None is more revealing than the story behind the government's reversal of position in *Bob Jones University* v. *U.S.* The issue in *Bob Jones* was the validity of an IRS rule, formally promulgated in 1970, that denied tax-exempt status to institutions that discriminated on the basis of race. The IRS concluded that an institution whose racial practices were contrary to settled national public policy could not meet the criteria for "charitable" status under the relevant federal statutes. Congress was fully aware of the IRS ruling and repeatedly declined to alter it, even while amending the relevant statutory provisions in other respects. When the ruling was again challenged in the late 1970s by Bob Jones University and the Goldsboro Christian Academy, the Court of Appeals easily concluded that the validity of the basic IRS position was firmly established law. In its initial brief to the Supreme Court, signed by Acting Solicitor General Lawrence Wallace, the United States routinely defended the validity of the IRS position.

Just before its final brief was due, the government made the stunning announcement that it was reversing its position in the Supreme Court, and would argue that the IRS had no statutory authority to deny tax-exempt status to racially discriminatory schools. Wallace signed the brief, but noted in an extraordinary initial footnote that the new position taken by the government did not reflect his views on this question. A small group of Justice Department conservatives who would come to be known as the "Bob Jones Team," including Reynolds, Charles Cooper, and Bruce Fein, had worked to bring about the switch, which had been urged on the department by Representative Trent Lott of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Mississippi and Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina.

As a theoretical proposition, there is something to be said for not having the IRS draw the line on what is and what is not "settled public policy." But here theory must give way to historical reality. The argument in the United States' brief that this denial of tax-exempt status was "based solely on an administrative determination" of nonconformity with national policy demonstrates a total lack of understanding on the part of the "Bob Jones Team" that anti-racism is not just another policy. No commitment is so firmly rooted in national policy as that of ending racially segregated education. Moreover, the tax-exemption issue was one that had been settled by the IRS, Congress, and the courts. Only an insular group of individuals could have failed to anticipate the public impact of an administration effort to reverse settled policy denying tax benefits to racist institutions.

COMING EARLY in Reagan's first term, the series of events surrounding this case served to define the public perception of the administration's approach to racial discrimination. In their submission in the *Bob Jones* case, officials in the Justice Department displayed the same insensitivity they would exhibit again six years later when, in selecting Robert Bork as their Supreme Court nominee, they apparently gave very little thought to the impact on his confirmation prospects of his having vigorously opposed, on both constitutional and policy grounds, the use of national law to ban racial discrimination in public accommodations.

Another telling example of the tension between the political agenda of the administration and the professional tradition of the SG's office was the dispute over the Alabama prayer case that arose early in Lee's tenure. In *Wallace* v. *Jaffree* the plaintiffs had challenged two Alabama statutes: one that provided for a moment of silence "for meditation or voluntary prayer"; and one that authorized teachers to lead students in group recital of a prayer that had been composed by government officials and enacted into legislation. Alabama federal Judge Brevard Hand held that both were constitutional. In sustaining the spoken prayer statute, Judge Hand declined to comply with the Supreme Court's school prayer decisions, holding that the Supreme Court had erred in its long series of decisions applying the establishment clause of the First Amendment to the states. According to the district judge, Alabama was free to establish an official state religion.

Reynolds and others urged the solicitor general to intervene in support of Judge Hand's extraordinary repudiation of Supreme Court precedent. This was too much for Deputy Solicitor General Paul Bator, a noted conservative legal scholar, who informed Caplan that "we couldn't [properly] do anything but insist on a reversal of Judge Hand. As a lower-court judge, he was bound by Supreme Court precedent. If not, what is the rule of law? The Justice Department cannot encourage lawlessness on the part of lower-court judges, and that's what we were being told to do." In the end Lee resisted the pressure from Reynolds and filed a brief that urged the Supreme Court to uphold the "moment-of-silence" statute, but sought to distinguish, rather than disparage, the Court's 1962 school prayer decision. According to some of the observers consulted by Caplan, Lee's refusal to urge the Court to overrule its 1962 school prayer decision led to pressure for his ouster and the installation of the supposedly more compliant Fried.

CAPLAN'S BILL of particulars concerning Fried's tenure as SG includes charges that important decisions were not being made independently by the solicitor general, but were being influenced by others in the Justice Department or the White House; that the SG argued legal propositions that had no reasonable chance of being accepted by the Court; that some briefs were written in a more political, strident, and disrespectful style than in the past; that some briefs appeared designed more to satisfy the administration's conservative political constituency than to persuade the justices; and that even in non-political cases the briefs for the government were no longer considered as trustworthy and reliable by the justices and their law clerks as had been the case in the past. The result, Caplan suggests, was that neither the long-term interests of the government nor the "rule of law" was well served.

Some of Caplan's charges—such as the suggestion that justices and law clerks no longer believe they can rely on the citations in the briefs filed for the government—necessarily rest on "confidential interviews" and thus cannot easily be assessed by the reader. Other criticisms can be substantiated from the

"How to tell you how much YS means to me? Not hard at all. I just tell you how breathlessly I await each copy, how enthusiastically I tell my friends about it, how quickly I devour the contents. I have thoroughly enjoyed each copy since its first appearance in my mailbox . . . I thank you for sending YS to me so I can resubscribe to not only your magazine but to your philosophy of the erotic."

JOYCE WOODY
Lincoln Park MI

Yellow Silk
Journal of Erotic Arts

"All persuasions; no brutality."

W.S. Merwin • Ntozake Shange • Susan Griffin • Robert Silverberg • Mayumi Oda Jean Genet • Tee Corinne • Pierre Louys Wanda Coleman • Judy Dater • Marge Piercy • Jessica Hagedorn • William Kotzwinkle • Jane Hirshfield • Eric Gill Victor Hernandez Cruz • Mary Mackey

YS, P.O. Box 6374, Albany CA 94706
$15/year • Quarterly

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

public record. The brief filed by then-Acting Solicitor General Fried in the 1986 abortion cases urging that *Roe* v. *Wade* be overruled contains an example of Fried's occasional stridency: "The courts of appeals betrayed unabashed hostility to state regulation of abortion and ill-disguised suspicion of state legislator's motives." One of Fried's predecessors, the late Judge Wade McCree, noted cautiously that the SG's briefs had become less "dispassionate" and "objective" than in the past. Justice Thurgood Marshall's recent comment was characteristically more pungent: "They wrote political speeches and put the word 'Brief' on them."

Fried's decision to urge that *Roe* v. *Wade* be overruled indicated to some observers that his brief was directed to a political audience rather than to the justices. Less than two years had passed since the Court had rejected the suggestion that *Roe* be overruled. Herbert Wechsler of Columbia Law School concluded that "the recency of the reaffirmation of *Roe* v. *Wade* coupled with the fact that there had been no change in the membership of the Court suggested to me that the government was engaged in posturing rather than practicing good law when it asked for a complete re-examination of the issue."

From accounts such as these, Caplan draws the larger inference that the solicitor general's office is no longer committed to the "rule of law." He thus suggests that all right-thinking persons, liberal or conservative, should join in condemning what has been done to the office of solicitor general. As one who believes that many of the civil rights and civil liberties policies of this administration are both regressive and constitutionally unsound, I am a receptive auditor for Caplan's charge of "lawlessness." In the end, however, I am not persuaded that one can convincingly establish a claim of lawlessness in the conduct of the solicitor general's office. It does not seem to me that Solicitor General Fried is guilty of anything more than advancing positions with which I strongly disagree and filing briefs that seem, at times, somewhat polemical. (Since *The Tenth Justice* was written, Fried has come under attack from the right for refusing to intervene more aggressively in "conservative agenda" cases. He declined, for example, to file an amicus brief defending the Georgia death penalty when it was attacked for being administered in a racially discriminatory manner.)

IF THE CHARGE of "lawlessness" cannot successfully be fixed on the solicitor general, something close to it seems appropriate when Caplan expands his context to include the Meese Department of Justice as a whole. In a series of provocative but not always coherent speeches, Attorney General Meese has sought to undermine the legitimacy of the tradition of protection of civil rights and liberties that has evolved through Supreme Court decisions since World War II. The first line of attack was set out in Meese's address to the American Bar Association in July 1985, in which he argued for a "Jurisprudence of Original Intent." Although cloaked in a rhetoric of deference to the Constitution, the attorney general's approach is in fact inconsistent with the text of the Constitution, the history of the adoption of the Civil War amendments, and evolving aspects of our constitutional practice that have their own claims to legitimacy. The attorney general would convert the broad guarantees of liberty and equality that were adopted when the 14th Amendment was ratified into a very limited set of rights that the Framers would have specifically included had they chosen to adopt such a list. The short answer to this argument is that the Framers did not so choose.

Those who proposed the 14th Amendment opted not for a narrow and specific list of rights against state governments but for broadly worded prohibitions against denying the "privileges and immunities" of citizenship, against depriving any person of "liberty" without due process, and for broadly guaranteeing the "equal protection of the laws," thus necessarily delegating to the future the responsibility for an evolving application of these principles to particular cases. It is not surprising that in his ABA speech the attorney general's account of constitutional history omits mention of the adoption of the 14th Amendment, for his jurisprudence makes sense only if one ignores its broad language.

THE CONSERVATIVE assault on modern constitutionalism asserts that the courts are "inventing new rights" in cases dealing with issues such as abortion and contraceptive freedom. But the core concept of the 14th Amendment is that government must have a reason before it interferes with the liberty of a citizen, and where the liberty in question can properly be denominated fundamental, the government must have a very good reason indeed. Thus the constitutional privacy decisions do not necessarily involve the creation of what Fried and Bork refer to as "new rights"; they can be seen instead as applications of an "old" right embedded in the text of the 14th Amendment to be free of governmental incursions on liberty that cannot be shown to advance a sufficient public interest.

Even more mischievous than the attorney general's speeches questioning the soundness of major Supreme Court opinions was his confused Tulane address calling into question whether Supreme Court rulings are legally binding with respect to persons not parties to the particular case. The attorney general was correct in noting that other branches of government also have an independent responsibility for interpreting and applying the Constitution. But by suggesting that it was proper and normal for a state legislator to ignore a recent Supreme Court decision, he either did not understand or chose to ignore the role that Supreme Court decisions customari-

DINOSAUR

As if someone took a trombone
and turned it into plumbing,
flung it into a fern swamp
with its brass bell aiming up
at its cousin the sun in the sky,
that's my cry, that's my cry,
after a hundred and fifty million
years of dominion, the last of us
but one lay down to say goodby,
and I alone am left to tell you,
how hunger, anger, love came to feign
a frank two-legged preference
for words. They are for the birds,
or for cats to purr before they eat
the birds. I became myself again
to make a secret replica of myself,
and who among us truly knows his
or her creator? Your creator was
a dinosaur with tits and hair.
Sometimes I could climb into
a school tower and shoot you
in a moving car, or reinvent
the particle of time that splits
an element. Lizard eyes roll
and caress heaven, saw of incisors
drips spit, brain a bright whir.
Then bow down my head and twist it
up, like all my ancestors, and
so I can save you, I disappear.

KENNETH ROSEN

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ly play in a country governed by the rule of law.

The legitimacy of modern constitutional law has been called into question not only by lawyers supporting the Reagan administration, but also by a few vaguely "left" academics, including some but by no means all of those connected to critical legal studies, who argue that legal principles are so "radically indeterminate" that judicial decisions cannot be very different from raw political choice. Notwithstanding the stress caused both by this critique and by the drumbeat of speeches and proposals by Meese, the structure of postwar constitutional law remains about where it was when this administration took office.

The action of the Senate in declining to confirm Bork was a signal vindication by a political branch of government of the proposition that some judicially articulated limits on popular government are consistent with our deepest beliefs. The constitutional center has held. This is not a trivial accomplishment. If we lose faith in the rule of law, if we come to doubt that disinterested justice is even possible, where do we turn when a popular leader next suppresses the publication of the Pentagon Papers, or withholds from the courts the evidence of his own criminal wrongdoing?

WALTER DELLINGER

Walter Dellinger is professor of law at Duke University.

LE MISÉRABLE

Hugoliad: or The Grotesque and Tragic Life of Victor Hugo by Eugène Ionesco translated by Dragomir Costineanu from the Romanian; by Yara Milos from the French

(Grove Press, 126 pp., $15.95)

When young Eugène Ionesco wrote his outrageous attack on Victor Hugo, ridiculing among other things Hugo's institutionalized glory as an Académicien, little did he know (he, the rebel who claimed to cherish failure) that he himself would one day be solemnly installed as an "immortal" member of the Académie Française. Such are the ironies of literary fate; and Ionesco's *Hugoliad*, a "demolition" of the great French poet, and an attack on all literary ambition, is ironic in more sense than one.

Hugoliad: or The Grotesque and Tragic Life of Victor Hugo, first published in a Romanian journal of the 1930s, is a preposterous text. On second thought, however, the unlikely encounter between the future dramatist of the absurd and Hugo seems almost unavoidable. Ionesco, the 26-year-old demystifier, was bothered, as were so many writers of his generation, by what was regarded as Hugo's grandiloquence, theatrical postures, pretenses at spiritual elevation, flabbiness, and hopelessly naive faith in human progress. Ionesco's debunking of Hugo is an anti-biography as much as it is an anti-hagiography.

The picture of Hugo presented in this ferocious deflation is that of a literary parvenu with limited intelligence but a monstrous capacity for work, a manipulator of extravagant metaphors totally lacking in lucidity, a master of self-praise endowed with nothing more than a resonant "tenor's voice" that hardly qualified him to pose as philosopher, statesman, reformer, and prophet. According to Ionesco, Hugo was completely perverted by vanity, he never lived authentically, and his body of writing amounts to nothing but a big "void."

Hugoliad is a book of laughter and excess. Caricature alternates with pastiche and nasty paraphrase of Hugo's most sentimental verses, which are taken out of context. Ionesco relentlessly fictionalizes ludicrous, intimate scenes in which Hugo insists on reading his own lines to his wife and to his mistress. Even while making love he cannot stop versifying. In fact, everything around Hugo seems to be contaminated with logorrhea; the flowers themselves produce Hugolian rhymes.

The mockery is occasionally amusing and inventive, but it is heavy-handed, and ultimately tedious. Only the aphoristic verve keeps the text going. Right or wrong, Ionesco will score with amateurs of wit-at-any-cost when he asserts that Hugo "spoke of silence with noise," that he is a master of "platitudes in color," that the only reason his work survived is that it is unreadable. When Ionesco speaks of Hugo's congenital bad taste and unscrupulousness, however, and accuses him of being simultaneously a hypocrite and a prodigy of mediocrity, even admirers of epigrammatic raillery might wonder, Why such a loathing, such acerbity, such wild overstatements?

The answers may well be more interesting than the animosity (real or feigned) toward the man and the writer named Hugo. For *Hugoliad* goes beyond an individual case, no matter how notorious. In its sarcastic and violently unjust way, it is a meditation on literary success, on the nature of genius, on literature as an institution. This "exercise in mischief" (Ionesco's own term), written in large part for the pleasure of scandalizing, has broader implications. As Gelu Ionescu puts it in a postscript, Hugo was "the prototype of the author/authority" for Ionesco. He embodied the monstrosity of genius seen as a spiritually deficient being, as the exact opposite of the saint.

The young rebel's venomous satire reveals, then, a deeper need for protest. Ionesco's first book, a collection of criticism characteristically titled *No*, questioned the status of literature ("If God exists, why write literature? And if He doesn't, why write literature?") in terms that betray not only a distrust of literature and of men of letters, but also a latent idealism. The indictment of the Man of Letters who lays claim to sacerdotal powers, and thereby becomes guilty of "a rape of the soul of things," corresponds to a notion of poetry that, for all its explicitly modernist negativity, hides a hopeless quest for purity. Poetry is thus opposed to literature. For poetry, in this perspective, can never be rhetoric; it is not discourse, but an outcry, a moan free from all logic and immanent in its "transcendental primitiveness." Better still, it is silence.

These yearnings for authenticity and sincerity in (and against) literature, this desire to master literary craft in order to unlearn it and to gain emancipation from eloquence, were features of the anti-Hugo feelings that set in after 1885, the year of his death; it was a reaction that lasted for several generations. Ionesco's stance is thus not at all atypical in a peri-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

od that produced Gide's famous answer, when asked who was the greatest French poet: "Victor Hugo, alas." Ionesco himself speaks of a "psychology of the historical moment." The young rebel, who may have shocked pious readers in Romania, appears in fact far from original in the context of France, where anti-Hugo virulence was fashionable at the time he wrote *Hugoliad*. It is revealing that in his anti-Hugolian fervor, Ionesco goes so far as to second the disparaging statements of the notorious reactionary and anti-Semite Charles Maurras.

It is indeed remarkable how conventional an enfant terrible Ionesco was. All the smug commonplaces of the anti-Hugo set are here. But that is precisely why *Hugoliad* is such an interesting document, why it deserved to be exhumed from an old Romanian review, translated from Romanian into French, and then from French into English. As a verbose epigram, it helps give Cocteau's witty quip its full value (for Cocteau's words imply admiration too): "Victor Hugo was a madman who thought he was Victor Hugo."

Genuine wit tolerates no redundancy. One might leave it at that, were it not that *Hugoliad* also contains a great deal of vituperative nonsense. To describe Hugo as enrolled in "the school of vanity and insensitivity," to dismiss his writings as "only a spilt bucket, straw and dirty water," is bad enough. But it is downright silly to claim that the notoriously limited Adèle Hugo had a much greater poetic sensibility than her husband, that the poet could have learned the meaning of poetry and authenticity from her. And it is absurd, to say the least, to assert that the author of *Les Contemplations* was "too busy to be able to think of either his life or his death." Even more deplorable is young Ionesco's bad taste, as he makes crude fun of Hugo's grief on hearing of his daughter's death by drowning (Ionesco describes Hugo in the process of downing his beer, chewing sausage, and gulping an "insufficiently masticated crumb of bread"), accusing him moreover of converting his grief into literature, and of being in the habit of defiling his dead.

Ionesco knows no bounds in his zest to revile the posthumous glory of Hugo. He accuses him (the ultimate absurdity) of political cowardice and betrayal, of having been a fellow traveler joining each political party as it came into power. The truth is exactly the opposite, as was demonstrated by (among many other less momentous episodes) Hugo's early endorsement of Louis Bonaparte in the brief days of the Second Republic, and by his fierce opposition to him after the dictatorial coup d'état of 1851, which transformed the president into an emperor and drove Hugo into almost 20 years of uncompromising exile.

TO SET the record straight after so many patent falsehoods would be pedantic. Only two points need be made. First, belittling Hugo's poetry in the name of modernity, which according to Ionesco "demolished" his poetic edifice, does not take into account the very apostles of modernity—Baudelaire, Flaubert, Rimbaud in particular—who stood in awe of the enormity of Hugo's genius, and of the splendor of his verse and vision. Mallarmé would not allow anyone to speak ill of Hugo in his presence. Second, belittling Hugo the man and public figure makes hardly any sense at all in view of his lifelong struggle against the death penalty, against cruelty and oppression of every kind, and his ceaseless defense of the disinherited and the exploited—which was not merely verbal or literary. Among other acts of courage, Hugo offered his hospitality to the hunted members of the defeated Commune, at considerable risk to his own safety.

Ionesco's distortions are surprising. But even more surprising is the insensitivity to what is radical, and radically modern, in Hugo's work: his sense of the grotesque, his subversion of the tragic code, his fictions about the revolutionary laughter of the slave rebelling against the laughing master. It is ironic that Ionesco, whose sense of the grotesque informs so much of his work, should have been so unaware of the significance of the poem "Le Satyre" or the novel *L'Homme qui rit* (*The Man Who Laughs*).

Ionesco's notion of the grotesque is evidently of a lesser nature. It tends to reduce the human figure to the ridiculous and the deformed ("hairs, bulges on top of and underneath other bulges . . . ," as he puts it in *Hugoliad*). Hugo integrated his sense of the ludicrous and the absurd into a broader, more generous vision. By contrast, Ionesco's skepticism about any rhetoric of ideals may well be a form of frustrated idealism, but such intolerance of the language of ennoblement has its limitations. Hugo may have known that our human

The time, the moon, hi-tech and great looks, with . . .

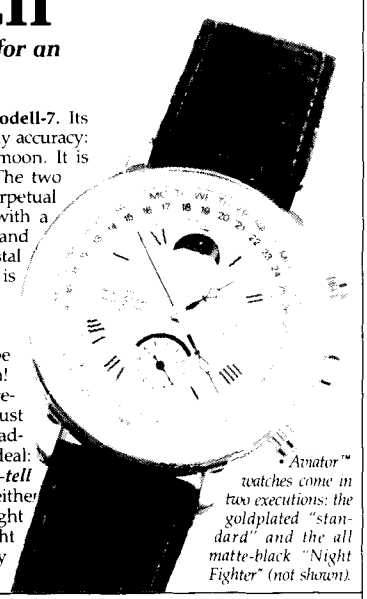
Aviator™ Watch

Just $99.00* ***But read the ad for an even better deal!***

This handsome watch is another inspired design by **rodell-7**. Its jeweled quartz movement is your assurance of uncanny accuracy: 15 secs./month. The upper dial shows the phases of the moon. It is steered by a separate 29½-days lunar month movement. The two outer day/date bezels rotate independently and make a perpetual calendar. The *Aviator*™ is micron goldplated and comes with a lizard-patterned brown leather band. The back is transparent and lets you watch the precision movement in action. The face crystal is hardened mineral glass, it will never scratch. The watch is water-resistant to 100 ft.

The *Aviator*™ is also available in a "Night Fighter" execution (not shown). It has white dial and a totally black matte anodized body. The matching metal band is of the "flexo" type (it slips over your wrist and adjusts). It's a very sporty watch!

We are the exclusive importers of **rodell-7** watches and therefore can bring you the *Aviator*™ at the extraordinary price of just $99. (You have seen almost identical watches advertised in leading catalogs for $149 and $199). But we have an even better deal: ***Buy two for $198, and we'll send you a third one (either model—tell us which!) with our compliments, — absolutely FREE!*** Pick either model: the "standard" goldplated *Aviator*™ watch or the "Night Fighter" version. You'll have a watch that'll give you the right time, the day/date, the moon, much enjoyment for many years! Treat yourself and order your *Aviator*™ Watch(es) today!



Aviator™ *watches come in two executions: the goldplated "standard" and the all matte-black "Night Fighter" (not shown).*

FOR FASTEST SERVICE, ORDER
TOLL FREE (800) 621-1203
24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Please give order **#2520E383** for "regular" *Aviator*™ or **#2521E383** for "Night Fighter". If you prefer, mail check or card authorization and exp. We need daytime phone for all orders and issuing bank for charges. UPS/insurance: $6.95 for one *Aviator*™, $8.95 for three. Add sales tax for CA delivery. You have 30-day return and one year warranty.

For quantity orders (100+), possibly with your logo, call Mr. Gerard, our Wholesale/Premium Manager at (415) 543-6570 or write him at the address below.

since 1967
haverhills
131 Townsend Street, San Francisco, CA 94107

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sorrows are, as Ionesco puts it, "earthworm sorrows"; but he also believed that human beings can and should rise above them.

VICTOR BROMBERT

Victor Brombert's latest book, *The Hidden Reader*, will be published this spring by Harvard University Press.

TRB, *from page 4*

rel. Since oil is oil, domestic producers also would be able to charge $24. With a current price of $18 and consumption running about six billion barrels a year, this would cost consumers about $36 billion a year. But since three-fifths of the oil we consume is domestic, not imported, only $14 billion or so would come to the government. More than $21 billion would be pocketed by domestic oil producers. Is a tax on consumers to benefit mainly oil barons "progressive"?

In 1985 Gephardt supported a failed effort to freeze Social Security benefits as part of a budget plan. Today he claims the "political establishment" is "just waiting for the election to be over so they can go back to trying to cut Social Security." This is hilarious, since there can't be a more establishment issue in the entire political firmament than the sanctity of every penny of Social Security. Only a few renegades like Bruce Babbitt have dared to point out that Social Security recipients get back far more than they put in, and to suggest that perhaps the better-off among them could do with a bit less. Social Security is financed by a starkly regressive and increasingly burdensome tax on working people. What is "progressive" about opposing any tiny change in the system?

Gephardt likes to tell journalists an adorable story about his nine-year-old daughter running for treasurer of her elementary school class and wishing to use the traditional campaign strategy of throwing candy to the crowd. Dad said, "Kate, you can't do that. That's buying the election. You really have to tell them what's in your heart." So she did, and lost. Next time, he agreed that she could approach each voter individually and ask for support. "Then, if you think you have their vote, take a piece of candy and put it in their hand." The Gephardt system.

The moral lesson here appears to be that there's a principled difference between pandering wholesale and pandering retail. Gephardt goes from one group to another, convinces each group that there's a plot to deprive them unjustly of candy, then promises to seize the candy from the malefactors and deliver it to those for whom it is no more than their just due. If they vote for him. And they'd better take him up on it quick, because I suspect that Gephardt-the-Populist is a special limited-time offer that may be withdrawn by the manufacturer as market research dictates.

CORRESPONDENCE, *from page 6*

ment is incapable of understanding what has happened to it. Recall Detroit's claim that our American gas guzzlers were driven from the market by unwarranted government regulation and that the Naderites would never be satisfied until we were all walking. Rossin did advocate that the DOE concentrate research funding on the LWR and on the Breeder Reactor program, views that played a major role in making his tenure as assistant secretary for nuclear energy remarkably short (nine months).

Mr. Negin's comments regarding nuclear waste suffer from a narrow focus. The nuclear fuel cycle that came into existence with the current LWR technology extracted small quantities of uranium from large quantities of ore, and reprocessed and concentrated the radioactive wastes for burial in inexpensive depositories (salt mines, deep ocean). Today there are new fuel cycles that are capable of extracting uranium from its ore far more efficiently, which skips the expensive reprocessing step that concentrates the wastes and makes them harder to handle, and that include waste burial in solid rock or volcanic tuff. This strategy is expensive but is warranted by the result, and European countries have already adopted it.

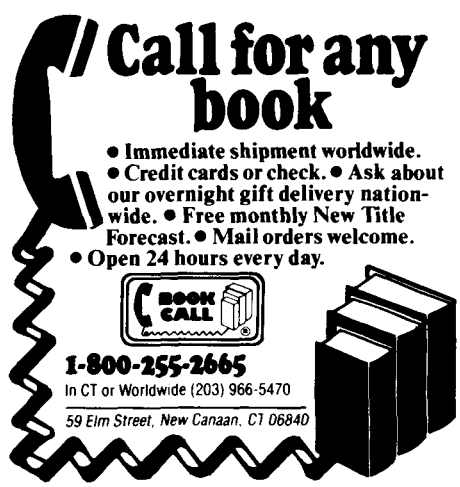
CAPITALISM'S PARADOX

To the editors:

In his review of Walter Russell Mead's book *Mortal Splendor: The American Empire in Transition* ("The Empire Strikes Out," January 4 & 11), Ronald Steel refers to Mead's claim that "conservative economics overthrows conservative order" as the "unacknowledged paradox of the right." Paradox, yes. But unacknowledged? Is Mr. Steel familiar with Daniel Bell's *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, whose thesis, essentially, is that capitalism (i.e., "conservative economics") is ultimately corrosive of bourgeois culture (i.e., "conservative order")? Or does he read George F. Will, whose writings have been permeated by similar arguments for over a decade? For that matter, has he consulted any of the scores of histories of the conservative intellectual movement, virtually every one of which emphasizes the tension between libertarian (or "economic") conservatism and traditionalist (or "order") conservatism? This paradox, far from being unacknowledged, has been one of the central (and most widely discussed) features of American conservatism for at least a third of a century.

DAN HIMMELFARB
New York, New York

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address, and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.


Call for any book
• Immediate shipment worldwide.
• Credit cards or check. • Ask about our overnight gift delivery nationwide. • Free monthly New Title Forecast. • Mail orders welcome.
• Open 24 hours every day.
BOOK CALL
1-800-255-2665
In CT or Worldwide (203) 966-5470
59 Elm Street, New Canaan, CT 06840

The Graduate Faculty

Ferenc Feher
Leon Festinger
Baruch Fishman

For *everyone* in The Graduate Faculty, *A through* Z, write or call for a Bulletin: Graduate Faculty, New School for Social Research, 65 Fifth Avenue, NYC 10003
(212) 741-5710

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WASHINGTON DIARIST

Pump Up The Volume

PITY THE YUPPIE. Even his own magazine has turned against him. In the latest issue of *Esquire* (subscription slogan: "Be smart, be satisfied, be a hero") the shiny pages reek of post-crash penance the way they used to smell of Giorgio aftershave. Bless us father, for we have sinned. It is three days since our last endive salad. Mercifully, my colleague Hendrik Hertzberg is in the magazine's confessional box. Poised delicately between articles on Swiss macaroni, Peter Jennings's soapstone Eskimo figurine collection, and a new brand of chocolates made to look like floppy disks, his article is somewhat implausibly called: "The Short Happy Life Of The American Yuppie." The era is over, but the temptations remain: "The food was good. I hope we can keep the food." Nevertheless, we should never forget that "what they produced (as lawyers, brokers, bankers, accountants, consultants, executives) was intangible." And we all know what the six deadly intangibles can do for the soul, as well as for the trade deficit. (Let's hear it for tangibles: Lumber! Coal! Glossy magazines!) But accountancy is just a fraction of the problem. In our midst, the liturgy is abused: "In the final nightmare, the Beatles' 'Revolution' was sold to be used as a jingle in an athletic shoe advertisement." Yoko have mercy. But let those without a Peugeot 505 cast the first papaya: "Who killed the yuppie? It was you and I. . . . We loaded onto him everything we hated about what we suspected we ourselves might have become." Te absolvo, in nomine Petri, Pauli et Mariae. For your penance, listen to Arlo Guthrie's "Alice's Restaurant" and wear a really wide tie.

I FEEL THE SAME way about yuppies as I do about smokers. I'm not one, but someone's got to stick up for them. It's not that class hatred hasn't occurred to me. I live in an old house in a recently yupped district of Washington. My rent's high thanks to the Hugo Boss suits round the block, and the roaches have fled the humidifiers next door to take refuge in my bathroom. The other night I found a bunch of them free-basing on my toothpaste, which is not, as *Esquire* would put it, Man At His Best. I also found out at Christmas that several old college friends are now earning six-figure salaries as merchant bankers in boom-town London. Worse, they haven't even had the decency to sell out. One's hoping for drama school in his 30s. Another's just left Deutschebank to write a Ph.D. I picked up a novel the other day by Hargurchet Babhra, who went to my high school. The flap copy tells me that after a successful career in international finance, this was his first book. I now know how Hertzberg feels. Hargurchet brought home the real yuppie nightmare: the creeping suspicion that they can have it all. They trade the Eurobonds, they get the rewards. But if they keep sane—let alone write a book—it's too much. It's enough to make people who still have a soft spot for Simon and Garfunkel wake up screaming in the middle of the night. The yuppies' crime is being good at the crass art of making a living, and then having the gall to make something out of their lives. Before long, they may even begin to prove you don't have to have been at Woodstock to know you've got a soul.

LUNCH WITH THE new Breck Shampoo Girls. Their latest image-changing publicity tour compelled them to seek an interview with someone at TNR, and reluctantly I consented. A free spinach salad with four all-new non-sexist "self-styled women" is not something you turn down absent-mindedly. But the combination was, well, a little surreal. One was a former White House speechwriter, one was a stockbroker, another a jet pilot: "Sure I've landed on carriers." But it was the "homemaker" who really scared me: "In my spare time I work as a gymnastics instructor. Apart from that, I help make the community a better place to be," she warned, darkly. "I went through the superwoman thing. Now I want to make a home." Maybe Joyce Brown's onto something after all.

COME TO THINK OF IT, perhaps I *am* a yuppie. I'm not usually prey to what the German left used to call, with characteristic lightness of touch, *Konsumterror*, but I'm fast becoming a compact disk junkie. It has something to do with the miraculous aesthetics: all that kaleidoscopic light somehow giving me the Pet Shop Boys. It certainly has nothing to do with the economics. The whole point of a CD is you can get three times as much music on it as on a record. In practice, you get two-thirds of the music for twice the price. Sometimes, you get less. Last week, in one of my more acute CD binges, I bought my first CD-single: a 20-minute funk-dance version of a subtle little number called "Pump Up The Volume." (The neighbors love it.) A steal at $15.99. On my count, it's around a buck a syllable.

BUT THE REAL SCAM is that this music is cheaper than ever to produce, thanks to computer programs that reproduce ("re-mix") any instrument, sound, and voice at prefixed rhythms (the unit is a bpm, or beats per minute). If Elvis were alive today, he'd be software. A recent album, *Best Of The House*, captures the future: 16 tracks, 16 artists, but only the studio's name is on the cover. The tracks are distinguished by the bytes on the drum machine. One song, "Do It Properly," by Two Puerto Ricans, A Blackman & A Dominican (Fierce Mix), sums it up. Not that there aren't alternatives. Thanks to computers, you can now get a Mega Mix, Hit Mix, Serious Mix, This Mix, a Scoobie Swift Scratch Mix, or, if you're completely hard-core, a Brutal Mix. George Michael even has a Monogamy Mix. But then he would.

IT OCCURS TO ME, though, that the ripest area for the re-mix concept is journalism. Editing is a little like re-mixing, and the word processor is to print what the drum-machine is to pop. Why not re-mix versions of the same magazine, adjusting for style, format, and ideology? You can see it now: "Do it Virtuously" by George Will, Three Haitians, and a Salvadoran (Unserious Mix). By 1990 you should be able to get the extended funk version of *Commentary* (Promiscuity Mix), and a three-page, 182-bpm version of the *New Yorker* (Restroom Mix). The possibilities are endless. All that's needed is a studio, a computer program, a few willing magazines, and a couple of hundred editors. If the yuppies die out, we could even lower the price.

A. S.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THOUSANDS
OF OPENINGS
Must have good interpersonal skills. Manage up to 210 persons daily. Basic work wk. 50 hrs. Computer a plus. Starting salary, $16,500. Can earn $25,000 after 15 yrs. Previous ed. exp. important. Must have BA/BS, & certification. Apply at your local School Board.
SERIES 3 LIC
Would you apply?

Not likely. Not if you're a college graduate who could start in another field at what a teacher earns after 15 years on the job.

That's why America desperately needs teachers. One million teachers between now and 1990. By every measure, we're going to be several hundred thousand short.

Imagine if we were talking about a shortage of physicians and surgeons. A massive teacher shortage has just as serious consequences on our society. Who will be there to prepare future generations to enter all the professions if there aren't enough teachers to do the job?

Shortages already exist all across this country, because for years college students in droves have chosen not to become teachers. In 1967, 22% of all college freshmen planned on teaching. By 1985 only 6% of the students polled said they wanted to teach.

What keeps college students from wanting to be teachers?

First and foremost, pay.

Right now there are four million Americans certified to teach who aren't in the classroom. And one-quarter of all education graduates decided never to seek teaching jobs. Countless more considered education but decided not to make it their major.

America has lost a generation of teachers. To fill in the gaps, schools are using teachers out of the fields of expertise or uncertified teachers to make sure classrooms aren't empty. This severely hurts the education process and masks the severity of the teacher shortage.

In a recent gallup poll, commissioned by the NEA, 80% of the American people favor higher teacher salaries. Almost half of those surveyed—41%—said they are willing to pay higher taxes to see that teachers are paid properly.

Americans want it. America desperately needs it.

Qualified teachers, paid professional wages. So that becoming a teacher is once again a respected and valued choice.

nea

The Subject is Excellence.

© 1987 National Education Association

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

De Beers

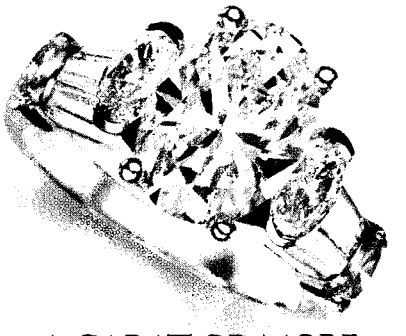
"I LOOKED AT THIS INCREDIBLE DIAMOND. I LOOKED AT HER. I HAD TO SEE THEM TOGETHER."

Every quality diamond of a carat or more is one of nature's rarest and most exquisite phenomena—with more fire, more sparkle and scintillation.

Each is a visible reflection of you. Unique in all the world, possessing four characteristics that set it apart forever. They are called the 4©'s: Cut, Color, Clarity and Carat-weight. These determine the value of a diamond—and to an astonishing degree, the beauty and value of your jewelry.

Your jeweler is the expert where diamonds are concerned. His knowledge can help make the acquisition of a quality diamond of a carat or more the beautiful, rewarding experience it should be.

A diamond is forever.



The ring shown features a quality diamond of 2 carats.

A CARAT OR MORE.
EXTRAORDINARY DIAMONDS FOR EXTRAORDINARY WOMEN.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED